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THE TRAGEDY OF THE CAESARS

A STUDY OF THE CHARACTERS OF THE CAESARS OF THE JULIAN AND CLAUDIAN HOUSES

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'OLD COUNTRY LIFE,' ETC., ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES

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VIDES OMNES HAS IMAGINES, QUAE IMPLEVERE CAESAREUM ATRIUM? NULLA NON HARUM ALIQUO SUORUM INCOMMODO INSIGNIS EST.

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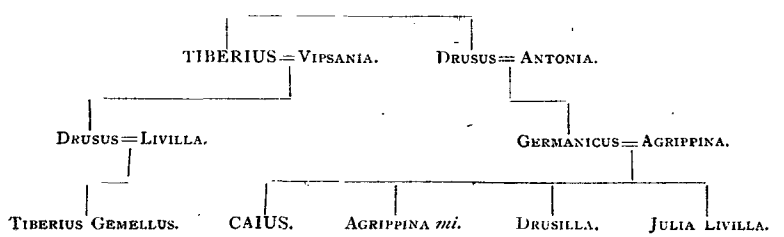
CAIUS (CALIGULA).

I.—EARLY YEARS.

THE story of Caius is that of a madman. In him that vein of insanity which was noticed in Agrippa Postumus, and in Drusus, the second son of Agrippina, became patent to all the world. He was even conscious of it himself.[1]

Our materials for a life of Caius are not abundant, nor can we select among them, and distinguish misrepresentation of facts and exaggeration as we can in the case of Tiberius, for, unhappily, the books of the Annals of Tacitus that dealt with the reign of Caius have been lost. Four entire books are lost, from the seventh to the tenth, containing the record of the transactions of less than ten years, a larger space proportionally than had been accorded to the details of the administration of Tiberius. We are thrown accordingly for the history of this period on the dry narrative of Dio, and on the gossip of Suetonius.

Caius Caesar, the youngest son of Germanicus and Agrippina, was born 31st August, in the year A.D. 12, apparently at Antium. An elder brother of the same name had died early, and this led to some confusion among historians as to his birthplace, some mistaking the place of nativity of the elder Caius for that of the younger, who alone survived, but Suetonius took pains to arrive at the facts from the public records. He spent his childhood in the camp on the Moselle and the Rhine,



[1] Tacitus speaks of his disturbed mind, 'turbata mens,' 'turbidus animi.' So does Seneca, and Suetonius tells us that Caligula was conscious of his own disordered mental condition.

where he received the nickname of Caligula, or 'Little Boots,' from the soldiers, who were gratified to see the child trot about in military stout sandal, with laces above the ankle. In the year A.D. 17, he accompanied his father and mother on the Syrian expedition. He was seven years old when Germanicus died; and after that he lived under

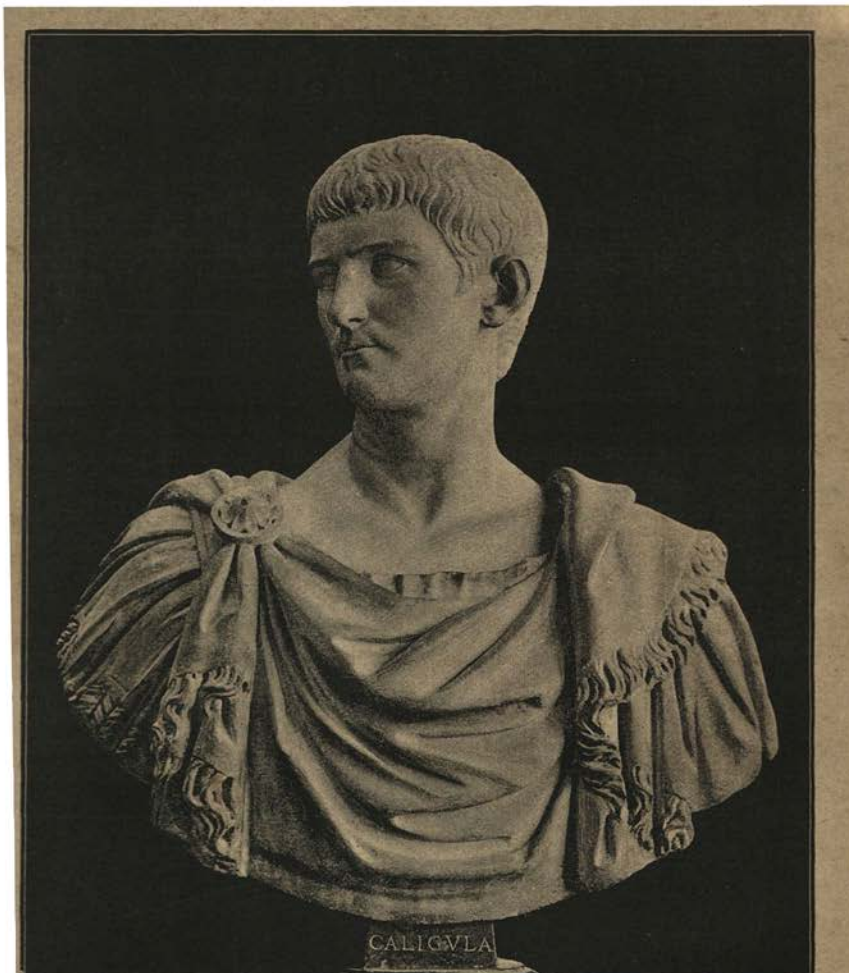


FIG. 82.—CAIUS. Bust in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

the supervision of his mother, and on her arrest, in the home of the old empress-mother, Livia, and then with his grandmother Antonia. These ladies either did not know how to manage him, or found him too much for them; he seems to have run wild in their houses, and lived in a

very disorderly manner. In his twenty-first year he assumed the manly toga and shaved. Tiberius on that occasion did not make the largesses to the people of Rome that he had on the occasion when Nero and Drusus attained their majority.

Probably on account of the annoyance he caused his grandmother by his misconduct, but also certainly to withdraw him from proximity to Rome and the chance of cabals being formed about him, Tiberius removed him to Capreae, and there he remained till A.D. 37, when he ascended the throne, when aged not quite 25. His constitution was weakly. In his childhood he had been subject to epileptic fits, and though he outgrew this tendency, he remained liable to sudden faintings. Early indulgence of his every appetite had fatigued and enervated both his physical powers and his brain, so that his condition when not that of absolute insanity was one that hovered on the verge, and occasionally passed into sheer madness.

Unhappily for him, at Capreae he had been the companion of the Idumaean, Herod Agrippa, who was twice his age.

'Intelligent and active, and well versed in men and affairs, Herod soon acquired unbounded ascendancy over the young prince, now trembling in the uncertainty of his own fortunes, and oscillating between the brightest hopes of power and the direst apprehensions. To Caius such a friend and mentor as the Jewish chief was invaluable. With Agrippa he passed the hours he could steal from the exacting jealousy of his uncle; from him he learnt the customs of the East and the simple machinery of Asiatic despotism, and imbibed a contemptuous disgust at the empty forms of the Republic, which served only, as he might in his blind inexperience imagine, to impede the march of government, while they contributed nothing to its security.'[1]

Caius lacked that education for the throne which had been given to his father, to Tiberius, and to Octavius. They had been trained in the camp to discipline themselves and to command others. They had attended the senate, and had pleaded before it. But Caius was held back from every form of public life, and then suddenly found himself possessed of absolute power. The transition was enough to make an ordinary head turn giddy.

There is, in the Torlonia collection at Rome, a very beautiful statue of Caius as a boy, it is of Greek workmanship, the face is fresh and innocent, and without that shadow that stole over it and obscured it, that turn of the neck so characteristic of the twist in the brain that marks all the later portraits. The beautiful Otricoli statue in the Vatican (Pio Clementino, No. 262) is not of Caligula, as determined by Visconti, but of Augustus. But the fact of there being any doubt as to whether a portrait belongs to Octavius or to Caligula indicates the fact that there was a family resemblance between them. The identi-

[1] Merivale, *Hist. Rom.* vi. 6.

fication, however, of the portraits of this emperor presents, as we shall see presently, very considerable difficulties.

Philo the Jew tells us that he heard in Rome, on trustworthy authority, that Tiberius, had he lived longer, would have got rid of Caius, so as to secure the throne to Tiberius Gemellus, as he had reason to suspect the sinister mind of Caligula, 'who was full of evil will towards the whole Claudian family and considered only his mother's, the Julian, stock.' He says that Macro persuaded the old emperor that the character of Caius was not so malicious as he supposed, and that more than once Macro acted as the protector of the young prince. The Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus, was born in the year that Tiberius died, and he has preserved to us an interesting incident relative to the friendship of Agrippa and Caius.

Herod stood high in favour with Antonia, and she often helped him in his pecuniary embarrassments. He lived in Rome, but was frequently at Tusculum, where he contracted a not disinterested friendship with Caligula, whom he believed to be destined for the empire.

One day when he and Caius were driving out together, he said to his companion that he hoped it would not be long before 'the old fellow died,' and then Caius would attain the object of his ambition. 'As for Tiberius Gemellus,' said the Jewish prince, 'he is easily got rid of.' This conversation was overheard by the charioteer, and when, some time after, the man was arrested for theft, he begged to be brought before the emperor, as he had a matter of importance to communicate to him. He was accordingly conveyed to Capreae and there kept in chains. Herod Agrippa was uneasy, and once when Tiberius was on a visit at Antonia's villa in Tusculum, he appeared before the prince and urged that the case might be gone into at once. But the 'old procrastinator' declined. He said: 'Let Agrippa be at his ease. If his servant tells lies, then his imprisonment serves him right. If he spoke the truth, then the consequence, when established, might be very unpleasant to Agrippa.'

Herod was not content, and urged Antonia to use her influence. Accordingly, one day, after the meal at noon, when Tiberius and the old lady were having a little turn together in a litter, she attacked him on the subject, and would not be satisfied till he promised to investigate the matter at once. He did so, and was so satisfied that the charioteer spoke the truth, that he ordered the arrest of Herod. Agrippa remained under guard till the death of Tiberius, but he was treated with great indulgence, allowed to receive his friends, and enjoy all the amenities of life, as the centurion in charge of him received instructions so to do from Antonia and Macro.

One day a trusty servant, the freedman Marsyas, brought the imprisoned prince the desired tidings, just as he was on his way to the

bath. He whispered into his ear in Hebrew, 'The Lion is dead.' The centurion on guard, who guessed from the haste of the messenger and the beaming face of the prince that the tidings were important, insisted on being informed what had been said. Agrippa told him that Tiberius was dead, and ordered a great supper and wine, and invited his guards to feast with him.

But whilst they were seated at table there arrived another message to say that the first news was false. The centurion, frightened to death, at once placed Herod in chains. A day or two later, the decease of the emperor was confirmed, and with it came the announcement of the succession of Caius to the throne. The new emperor's first act was to set his friend at liberty, but he was unable formally to liberate him till after the funeral of Tiberius, as his grandmother told him 'it was against all decency to discharge the prisoners of the late emperor before he was laid at rest.' To make amends for his imprisonment, Caius conferred the diadem on Herod and nominated him to be king of a portion of Judaea. It is probable that Josephus got this story from Thaumastor, a page of Caligula, who passed into the service of Herod Agrippa, went with him to Judaea, and became his major-domo, an office he retained, after the death of Herod, with his children.

The announcement of the emperor's death was communicated to the senate in a letter from Caius, the bearer of which was Macro. At the same time the testament of the late Caesar was presented to them. Caius informed the conscript fathers that he desired every posthumous honour that had been given to Augustus should be likewise and in full measure accorded to Tiberius, but he requested that the dying prince's disposition—the division of his patrimony, of his rights to the throne between Caius and Gemellus—should be annulled as the act of an incapable dotard. The will was accordingly set aside, a public funeral was appointed, and the functions and dignities of empire were heaped on Caius alone.

A.U.C. 790.
A.D. 37.
Aet. 25.

He then set forth from Campania with the body of Tiberius. 'Upon his moving from Misenum, although he was in mourning, and following the corpse, he had to walk amidst altars, victims, and flaming torches, with prodigious crowds of people everywhere attending him, in transports of joy, calling him, in addition to other auspicious names, by such titles as these: "their star," "their chick," "their pretty puppet," and "bantling."'

Immediately after the funeral of Tiberius followed another, to which filial piety called him. He at once started, though in a gale of wind, for the islands where had died his mother and eldest brother, to bring thence their ashes. 'He approached their remains with profound veneration, and deposited them in their urns with his own hands. Having brought them with great solemnity to Ostia, with an ensign flying at the stern of the galley, and thence up the Tiber to Rome,

they were borne by persons of the first distinction in the equestrian order, on two biers, into the mausoleum (of Augustus) at noon.'

The setting aside of the will of Tiberius had been demanded solely in order that the coequal rights of Gemellus might be annulled. Caius fulfilled every other particular of the will scrupulously; he moreover executed all the last bequests of Livia, whose testament Tiberius had set aside.

Then, entering the senate-house, he addressed the conscript fathers in terms full of respect and diffidence. He declared himself the ward of the senators, and invited them to assist him and relieve him of the toils of government, and to advise him as to the direction he should take. Then, thinking that the setting aside of the young Tiberius might occasion uneasiness, he pointed out that the boy was only in his eighteenth year, and not yet arrived at the legal period which would permit him to enter the senate, and he solemnly assured all who heard him that he would be a careful guardian to the lad.

II.—THE FIRST MONTHS.

CAIUS issued a general pardon to all such as were in prison, and recalled those who were banished. He produced a large bundle of papers, which he informed the senate contained the depositions relative to the trial and sentence of his mother and brothers, and burnt them in public, with the solemn assurance that he had not looked into them, and did not know the names of those who had informed, or given evidence against them. As, however, at a later period he pursued all who had been engaged in these prosecutions with relentless severity, it was believed that he had burned other papers, or had provided himself with copies before he destroyed the original transactions. When a paper was presented to him that purported to contain information relative to a plot contrived against himself, Caius refused to receive it, alleging that as he had wronged nobody it was impossible for him to believe that any man had conspired against him. He proscribed the most infamous ministers to the vice that corroded Roman society, and, unless restrained by his advisers, would have put them all to death by drowning.

At the beginning of the month of July Caius accepted the consulship, and associated with himself his uncle Claudius. The obsequious senate had desired, immediately on his accession, to turn out of office one or both of the existing consuls, Proculus and Nigrinus, and to nominate him to a perpetual consulship, but he declined, and waited for his election till the term of those occupying the office was accomplished. On the day when Caius assumed the insignia of the consulship, he made a speech to the senate, so full of assurances of his liberal

intentions, and of promise for the future, that they ordered it to be annually recited in public.

On August 21st, which was his birthday, he gave magnificent games, inaugurated with the hitherto unheard-of luxury of cushions on the benches for the senators. This was the beginning of a system of conferring amusements on the people that became almost continuous throughout the year, and cost the treasury enormous sums, whilst they wearied the people with their over-frequency.

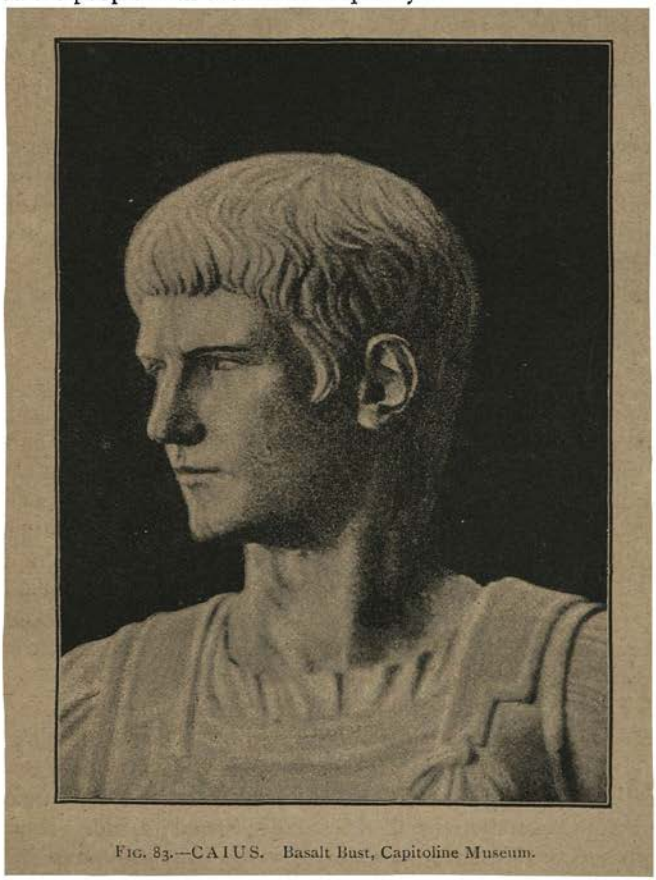


FIG. 83.—CAIUS. Basalt Bust, Capitoline Museum.

In the first year of his reign, Caius refused to permit any statues to be erected in his honour, especially such as represented him with the attributes of a god.

We have no reason to suppose that the unfortunate young prince was playing the part of a conscious hypocrite all the while; yet this is what probably would have been the representation of Tacitus in the last books of his History, for in that which relates to his residence at

Capreae with Tiberius he prepares the way by describing him as an arch-dissembler; in boyhood, disguising his feelings at the death of his mother and brothers, and accommodating his humour to that of the emperor, with a cunning beyond his years. We may believe that the expedition to Pandateria to fetch the ashes of his mother, and the stately funeral of mother and brother, were prompted by genuine piety to their memory, and so also his association of his sisters with himself in honour (he made the senate swear to honour them as they honoured himself) was an extravagant expression of sincere family affection. We may allow that the tears he shed when pronouncing the panegyric over the body of Tiberius were produced by real feeling. He must have felt some regard for the old man who had treated him with such care and kindness, unless we suppose that he was the monster he is represented, destitute of genuine good feeling. His conduct during the first eight months of his reign rather shows us a rise of his better nature, a sincere wish to stand well with all classes, to bury past wrongs in oblivion, and inaugurate a period of happiness. The late emperor had been unpopular, not because of his cruelties, as Tacitus would have us believe, but because he disliked and kept aloof from the bloody scenes in the arena, and the indecent exhibitions in the theatre. He was not a genial man, and the mob was ever ready to excuse faults in their princes if they had *bonhomie*. This, we are told, was the case with Drusus, son of Tiberius. His father reproved him for his love of bloodshed in the amphitheatre, and his excesses at table were well known. Yet the people said: 'Let him employ his days in shows, and his nights in banqueting; that is better than solitude and seclusion from pleasure.' [1]

Caius knew the temper of the people and indulged it; but as he lacked discretion, he did not know when and where to stop, and he glutted the populace to surfeit with shows.

At the end of October the young emperor fell dangerously ill, and as up to this time the Romans had found only happiness under his government, the condition of his health caused lively alarm. Crowds spent the night outside the doors of the palace, expecting tidings of a change in his condition. Some made vows to the gods that they would fight among the gladiators if he recovered, others besought the gods to accept their lives in place of that of their beloved sovereign.

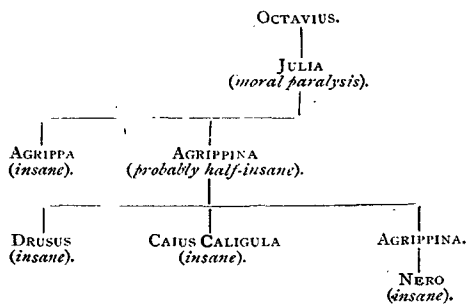
At this point it will not be amiss to say something on the mental condition of Caius.

He was subject to epileptic fits: epilepsy was in the family. Julius Caesar had it; he had two fits when engaged in war, but that was all. Many great men have had them occasionally, but when they occur frequently they lead to softening of the brain. There are two forms of epilepsy, the *grand mal* and the *petit mal*. In the former there are

[1] Tacit. *Ann.* iii. 37.

convulsions, in the latter momentary loss of consciousness without convulsive movements. In a bad fit of the former the muscular power is often excessive; the body is bent forwards or drawn backwards with great force; the eyes roll furiously; the lips are convulsed, and covered with a frothy saliva. When the attacks are frequent, the distortion of the facial muscles becomes fixed, the patient grinds his teeth, makes grimaces, the lips become puffed, the face flabby, and the look of intelligence disappears from the eyes. The afflicted person becomes subject to the wildest caprices and paroxysms of anger without apparent cause. The final condition is idiotcy.

Now, Caius we know suffered both from the worst attack of this disorder, as well as from the less serious; and there can be little question that the sickness mentioned by the historians, but not, unfortunately, described by them, was a violent attack of epileptic fits, which, when they passed, left Caius in a measure deranged. Surely this table speaks for itself:—



On his recovery, the altars smoked with victims, the streets rang with joy, and the Jews shared, we are assured, in the general satisfaction. But the satisfaction was destined to be of short duration. Whatever his malady was, the prince rose from it very much changed, if not in disposition, at all events in conduct. If hitherto he had worn a mask, with convalescence he cast it aside; if for a period of a few months he had rejoiced in the favour of the people, and had striven to retain it, he now found a pleasure in striking awe into their hearts, and in dissipating every particle of the affection he had inspired.

He began to suffer from want of sleep; he seldom obtained more than three or four hours' rest in the night, and then could not sleep soundly, as he was disturbed with frightful dreams, fancying that old Ocean conversed with him in roaring tones. Unable to lie quiet when sleep forsook him, he would sit up in bed a prey to wild fancies, schemes, and terrors, or ramble about the porticoes of the palace, looking out for the approach of day.

III.—THE TYRANT.

ALMOST from the moment that he arose from his sick-bed, Caius behaved in a manner the reverse of his previous conduct. Some of his actions were certainly those of a madman, but he had intervals of sense, though he never again returned to the amiable mood of the first stage of his imperial career. To describe in a few words the change that took

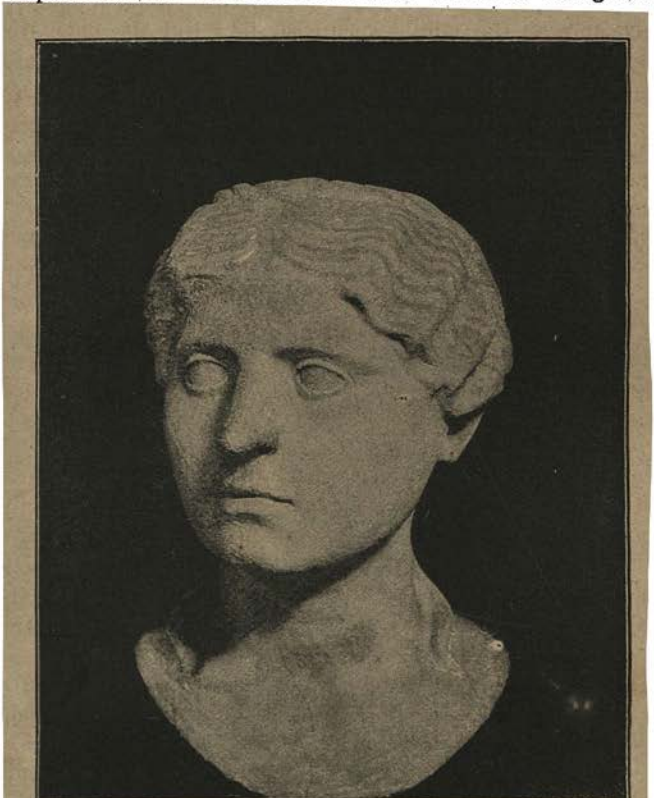


FIG. 84.—ANTONIA. Bust, Museum Chiaramonti, No. 701.

place in him, Suetonius says that at first he acted as a prince, afterwards as a monster.

At the time of his sickness he had drawn up his will, in which he constituted his second sister, Drusilla, to whom he was devotedly attached, heiress of his property and of the empire. He snatched her away from her husband and associated her with himself in a manner that gave rise to scandal. She had been united to Cassius Longinus by Tiberius, but Caius, apparently after his sickness, divorced her from

Longinus and married her to a creature of his own, M. Lepidus, and then took her from Lepidus and startled even dissolute Rome by the declaration that he proposed marrying her. This relation—even in Rome, not squeamish as to moral scandals—was regarded as one crying out to heaven for vengeance.

In the general indignation which found voice, both the person of the prince and the whole imperial house were placed in danger; and, as formerly Octavia and Livia had made their influence felt in all matters concerning the family welfare, so now did the aged Antonia feel herself called on to interfere in the interests of the throne. At the time when Sejanus was meditating a *coup de main* she had sent warning to Tiberius of his danger; and when her grandson succeeded, she did not forget her duty as a guardian. On this occasion we cannot doubt that she interfered to remonstrate with the young prince. It is to this interference, almost certainly, that certain passages refer in the biography of Caius by Suetonius. When one day she warned her grandson not to think that he had now no superior over him, he answered contemptuously: 'Everything is lawful to me, and I may do as I will to any one.' When she entreated for a private conference, he refused to speak with her except in the presence of Macro, the praefect of the guard. Moreover, he threw into prison the Jew, Alexander Lysimachus, her steward, who had been a tried friend to her son, Germanicus, his own father.

When, not long after, Antonia died, all signs of honour were discarded at the funeral, and Caius contemplated from the window of his dining-hall with indifference the pile on which her body was burnt. It was not surprising that rumours circulated that he had forced his grandmother to commit suicide, or that he had had her poisoned. In all probability the old and virtuous lady's heart was broken by disappointment.

The Pharaohs of Egypt from a remote past had married their sisters. The divine royal race was too sacred to mate with one that was of a baser origin. The great Jupiter had taken as consort his own sister Juno,—such an union became a heavenly race; and Caius was inflated with the notion that the Julian family was divine, and must follow the divine precedents. It might condescend to love below its order, but must mate in it.

On medals and on cameos, the heads of Caius and Drusilla appeared together; and it is probable that he would have carried his daring purpose into effect, and have openly married her. But his mad purpose was frustrated.

The unhappy girl fell ill, with shame may be, and died. Caius was plunged in a frenzy of despair. He gave orders that a public funeral of extravagant splendour should be decreed to her, and then insisted that she should be deified and worshipped with temple, statues, and

sacrifices. But he did not attend the funeral himself, he declared himself incapable of controlling his feelings and distracted his mind by rushing away to Alba, and there devoting himself in his country villa to the most trifling amusements. Livius Geminius, a senator, obligingly professed that he had seen Drusilla ascend into heaven, attended by all the gods, whereupon he was rewarded with a million sesterces; and Caius declared that his divine sister should bear thenceforth the name of Panthea (the All-goddess), and be worshipped with like honours to those offered to Venus the Ancestress. The citizens hardly knew how to conduct themselves to suit the fancy of the crazy sovereign. It was impiety to mourn the apotheosis, and it was death not to mourn the dead. Several citizens suffered capitally for entertaining a relative or a guest, or for indulging in a bath, on the days that followed the funeral.

A.U.C. 791. A.D. 38. Aet. 26.

Unable to find rest in his Alban villa, the mad prince roved through the cities of Italy and Sicily, and let his hair and beard grow in token of sorrow. He would thenceforth swear by no other oath than 'the divinity of Drusilla.'

Drusilla was not much, if at all, over the age of twenty when she died. That numerous statues of the new goddess were erected throughout Italy, there can be no doubt—one of gold was set up in the forum—but it is hard, if not impossible, to identify them among the female busts of that epoch. It is very probable that of the many supposed to represent Agrippina the Younger, her sister, one or two of the most youthful may really be the portraits of this unhappy girl. There is, however, one in the Torlonia Museum supposed, with some probability, to be Drusilla, for it bears on it a decided look of the family, a likeness to her brother, and yet it certainly is not Agrippina.[1]

On the day on which the young Tiberius entered on his nineteenth year, Caius adopted him, and he assumed the toga of manhood. Caius gave him the title of Prince of the Roman youths. Philo says that the object of Caius in adopting him was believed to be to take away from him the right, based on his grandfather's will, of being associated with himself in the empire, and to give himself those extensive, all-embracing legal rights over him, extending even to life, which were recognised as belonging to a father over a son.

The poor boy was delicate, and suffered from a cough that he was unable to overcome. One day he was at table with Caius, when the latter noticed that his breath had a medicinal savour, caused by Tiberius having taken some remedy for his cough. Caius at once and savagely

[1] A statue in the Vatican found at Cervetri most probably does represent the unfortunate girl, for with it was found an inscription that fixes it. She is dressed in a stola and palla, and wears a crown above the brow. In one hand is a censer, which has reference to the privileges of a vestal virgin with which Caius invested his sister. Unfortunately the figure was found without a head, and that now affixed to it did not originally belong to it.

charged him with having taken an antidote, as being suspicious of poison at the table, and loudly mocked him for thinking it possible to take any suitable precaution against him, his father by adoption, and his prince. Soon after he sent him a message by a tribune that he must put an end to himself, as it was unlawful for any man to shed the sacred blood of the Caesars. Tiberius bent his head for the blow, but the tribune did not venture to strike, and repeated to him the command of the emperor. Tiberius then took the sword, but as he had never seen any one killed[1] he did not know how to put an end to himself with it. The tribune indicated to him the most vital part, and the unfortunate boy then threw himself on the sword.

FIG. 85.—TIBERIUS GEMELLUS (?). Bust in the Lateran Museum (after Bernoulli [2]

Caius gave out that the young prince had committed suicide, being weary of life and hopeless of recovery from his cough. The boy very probably was in a decline. This crime initiated a long series of others.

No man had more claims on his gratitude than Macro, who, so it was believed, had repeatedly interfered to save his life when Tiberius,

[1] And yet he had been brought up with his grandfather at Capreae. How is this reconcilable with the stories of executions there committed by order of Tiberius the elder?

[2] There are two busts that may taken to represent Gemellus, one in the Lateran, No. 153, one in the Chiaramonti Gallery, No. 715, where it is catalogued as Tiberius. There is a strong look of Tiberius in the face, and also of Drusus Minor; and yet it is certainly neither, the head being differently shaped. It is possible that these two may represent the unhappy Gemellus. Observe the hair down the nape of the neck.

uneasy at the danger that threatened his own grandson, and well aware of the crazy condition of the brain of Caius, meditated his destruction. But the obligations under which Caius had been laid by Macro were too great to be repaid. It was said that Ennia, the wife of Macro, had simulated a passion for the young prince, before the death of Tiberius, in the hopes of obtaining over the future emperor the ascendancy of a mistress. He had promised to make her his empress, and now was perhaps somewhat pertinaciously reminded by Ennia of his promise, and by Macro of his obligations.

According to Philo, Macro was entirely ignorant of the intrigue carried on between his wife and Caius, and he had not only saved the life of the prince when the suspicions of Tiberius were roused, but after Caius had come to the throne, he used his best endeavours to restrain him from unseemly exhibitions of levity. He was ever at his side, and by a touch of his elbow woke him when he nodded at table, or checked him when he roared with laughter at the jokes of the mimes, or bade him observe decorum when he cut fantastic capers to the playing of the flutists. All this annoyed the vain boy.

'I am a boy no more,' said Caius to his courtiers. 'Look at that man, he conducts himself as though still my tutor. I, who was born a prince nursed by emperors, cradled in a cabinet of state, must, forsooth, bow before an audacious upstart, a novice affecting the airs of a hierophant.' The doom of Macro was sealed, but as a favour he was permitted to be his own executioner, and Ennia to perish with him. After which all their children were put to death, that there might remain on earth no further reminder to Caius of his indebtedness to the family.

Having rid himself of his greatest benefactor, Caius proceeded to disencumber himself of his most prudent adviser. This was his father-in-law, M. Junius Silanus, a man who belonged to a noble and ancient family, who had been highly regarded by Tiberius, and had grown old in the discharge of responsible offices. Silanus was proconsul of Africa at the beginning of the reign of Caius, and was in command of the legion that was stationed in the province.

Caius resented the advice the old man sent him, that he should control his caprices, and correct the faults in his character. He recalled him from his command because he had thus presumed.

Shortly after the young emperor put to sea and ordered his father-in-law to attend him. The weather was rough, and the old man a bad sailor, and he put back to shore, or delayed his departure awaiting a smoother sea. Caius charged him with wilful disobedience and with intent to plot against him, and sent orders to an honourable and eloquent senator, Julius Graecinus, to impeach him. Graecinus refused to sully his reputation by such an act, and Caius in revenge had him put to death. Then Caius sent a message to the old man 'to take his com-

pliments to the spirits of the dead'—meaning the deceased daughter of Silanus, his own girlish wife, Junia Claudilla, who had died two years before. There was but one interpretation of this message, and Silanus, in order to save the confiscation of his goods, committed suicide by cutting his throat with a razor.

'Whether Caius acted the most infamous part in entering on his marriages, or in repudiating his wives, or in retaining them,' says Suetonius, 'it would be hard to say.' He had been married in Capreae to Junia Claudilla, but she died, and in the first year of his reign being invited to the wedding of Caius Piso with Livia Orestilla, he took a fancy to the bride and carried her off, but tired of her very soon, divorced her after a few days, and two years later banished her. Then he happened to hear that Lollia Paulina, wife of a Memmius Regulus, in command of Macedonia, was very like her grandmother, who was a noted beauty. Lollia was the granddaughter of M. Lollus, whom Augustus had appointed tutor to Caius Caesar in the east, and there he had amassed a vast fortune. Lollia possessed the most magnificent sets of jewels of any Roman lady. It is of her that Ben Jonson happily says:—

> 'She came in like star-light, hid with jewels,
> That were the spoil of provinces.'—(*The Fox*, Act iii. Sc. 6.)

But in beauty she outshone her gems.

Caius ordered her to come to Rome, and being satisfied with her appearance, married her, but speedily tired of her also. But he loved with an unbounded and constant affection a woman named Caesonia, the mother of three daughters by another man, who was neither young nor beautiful. He married this woman. Caius was himself surprised at the strength of his attachment, and declared that he would some day put her on the rack to discover whether she had given him a love philtre or not. Sometimes he would touch her neck and laugh, and say, 'When I give the word, this beautiful throat will be hacked through.' But indeed this grim remark was made to others also. At a banquet to which he had invited the consuls, he suddenly burst into an unseemly fit of laughter, and when asked by the consuls what the joke was that had tickled his august fancy, 'Nothing,' he replied, 'but that at a single nod of mine you would both have your throats cut.'

Caesonia knew how to humour his capricious fancy. She would assume a military cloak and a glittering helmet, sling a shield on her arm, and ride by him when he reviewed the troops. Very shortly after their marriage she gave birth to a daughter, whom Caius acknowledged as his own child, and he gave it the name of Julia Drusilla, thereby taking it into the Julian family. When he saw the little creature bite and claw at its nurse, or fly at another child and try to tear out its eyes, Caius applauded and declared that after such exhibitions he could never doubt that the child was his own.

One day he found the roads muddy, whereupon he ordered the officer in charge of them to be brought before him, and his mantle to be laden with road-scrapings. That man's name was Vespasian, and when, many years after, this officer came to the empire, the incident was recalled and thought to have prognosticated his future greatness. Every tenth day the list of prisoners was brought to Caius and he signed the decree for their condemnation to death, which he called 'clearing his accounts'; but even this effort became irksome to him, a single wave of his hand was taken as a sufficient signification of his intention to hand over the victims to the executioner.

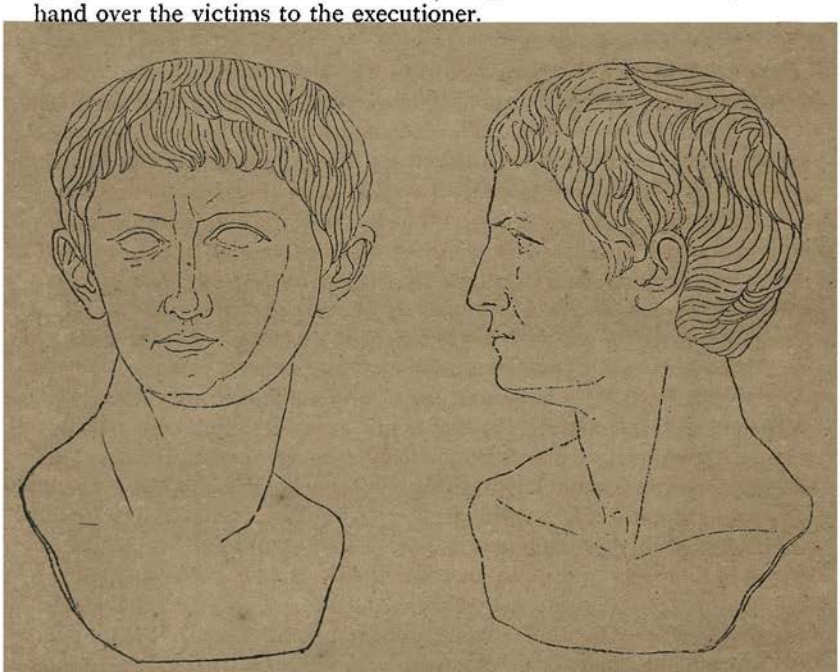


FIG. 86.—CAIUS. Bronze Bust at Turin (after Bernoulli).

He generally prolonged the sufferings of his victims, says Suetonius, by causing them to be inflicted by slight and frequently repeated strokes, his usual instruction being, 'strike so that he may feel himself die.' He had frequently in his mouth the words of the tragedian:—

'Let them hate me whilst they fear me!'

A different saying indeed from that of his predecessor, who was wont to say: 'Let them hate me whilst they *approve* my conduct.'

The question may be asked by the reader, Why are we to trust Suetonius in his statements relative to the cruelty of Caligula and to reject those relative to the cruelty of Tiberius? The statements rest on

totally different grounds. The latter gives us no evidence but hearsay of cruelties committed in Capreae, and names but two officers there tried and condemned to death. All the executions that took place in Rome took place by order of the senate, and the majority when Tiberius was not there. With Caius it was otherwise. The narratives of Suetonius and Dio are in full accord with what we know of Caligula from contemporaries, Philo the Jew and Seneca, the latter of whom gives us instances of his cruelty as bad as any story in Suetonius, and not as mere gossip; for he names the sufferers, and distinctly informs us that the executions were ordered by the prince, and were frequently carried out under his own eye.

But that is not all. The accounts we have of Tiberius come to us from a partisan source, they are all tinctured with hatred of the Claudian house. On the other hand, the accounts we have of Caius—and the same applies to Nero—are furnished us by the men of their party, men who would, if they could, whitewash their memories and condone their acts, for Caius and Nero were of the Julian and not of the Claudian family, and the writers laboured under disappointment at the failure of these representatives, and were not inflamed with party malice against them.

Tiberius at his death left the exchequer well filled. It contained two thousand seven hundred millions of sesterces, amassed by his frugality and prudent administration. All this Caius squandered in less than a twelvemonth. Then, being in want of money, he had recourse to plundering the wealthy by false accusation and confiscation, and the people generally by taxation. Like a child he did not know the value of money.

Dio says of him that he was always uncertain, and flying from one extreme to another. 'Sometimes he liked to see people, sometimes to be alone. He was vexed when asked a favour, vexed when not asked one. He was energetic in some things, in others dilatory. He spent with limitless prodigality, but he also amassed with the most sordid greed. Sometimes he liked liberties to be taken with him, and flattery; at other times resented both. Sometimes he forgave the gravest faults, sometimes, and more often, put to death those who had committed none. His favourites he loaded with favours, at other times he treated the same men with the utmost contempt; so that no one knew what to say or to do to please him; and if there were some who kept in his good graces, it was due to accident rather than to their talents.' Compare with this the testimony of Philo, a contemporary. 'No one could trust his mood. When he had done a favour, he regretted it immediately, and sought means not only to take back what he had given, but to make it to be repaid with usury by the greatest wrongs. Thus, sometimes he delivered from prison certain persons and soon after sent them back again, adding to their former misery the despair of knowing that they

could never expect mercy. There were cases where he banished those who were in hourly expectation of sentence of death from so inexorable and cruel a judge. Then, when they were settling into happiness in their exile, and believing they had nothing more to fear, he sent orders for their execution. If he gave a largess to any one, he made that man return it, not as money lent on interest, but he exacted it as a sum of which he had been robbed, and accordingly the unhappy recipient was mulcted of all he had. Those who stood highest in his favour he ruined under the pretext of showing them a kindness, by dragging them about after him in his journeys undertaken capriciously, all of a sudden, at the first freak of his fancy, or by inviting himself to their table and forcing them to spend all they had, and involve themselves in debt to entertain him suitably. Consequently those who were prudent dreaded his favours as traps laid for their destruction.'

Seneca, another contemporary, says: 'He had a number of senators and Roman knights whipped and put to very cruel tortures in his presence, not that he expected to get any information out of them relative to a conspiracy, but simply because it amused him to see them suffer. Once he had some decapitated by torchlight whilst he was walking in a garden alley looking on. His cruelty did not allow him to postpone to the morrow the pleasure of an execution. He was the first to submit senators to torture. But it was a small matter for Caius to put senators to death like slaves, with whips and fires—he who daily exercised himself in cruelties, who only lived and thought to shed blood, who indeed once formed the plan to massacre the whole senate, and who wished that the Roman people had but one neck, that he might cut it through at once and so sum into one the crimes he was obliged to commit in detail and in different places.'

There is absolute unanimity in the accounts we have of Caius; those of contemporaries agree in the portrait with which we are presented by the historians who wrote at a much subsequent period. This is not the case with Tiberius. There is not a particle of contemporary evidence against him.

Caius gave orders for executions in Rome, in many cases without a form of trial. In his mad pride he strove to elevate the imperium into an oriental despotism. In the times of Augustus and Tiberius the empire had been disguised under modest forms, but under Caligula absolute power appeared in all its pride and recklessness.

On the Palatine, the seat of the Rome of Romulus, Augustus had possessed a simple dwelling unmarked by splendour, recognisable only by the withered wreath of oak leaves that swung above the door. Tiberius had added his palace beside that of Augustus; it was large but not sumptuous. But Caligula ordered all the houses, in what was one of the finest quarters of Rome, to be levelled, that he might build on their site a splendid palace and temples over against the Capitol. Augustus

bought the houses that stood in the way when he desired to extend the forum. Caius seized on the patrimony and ancestral mansions of the nobles because he wanted them, and gave no compensation.

But now, intoxicated with power and elevation, he became convinced of his own deification. That same 'assurance' which a self-righteous Christian professes, came over the pagan madman. We must not suppose that he and the Romans of his time had a conception of deity such as is ours. With them there was a certain *afflatus*, an inspiration, an exaltation into a condition of spiritual superiority to other mortals. And this is what Caius professed. Not content with having a temple to himself, in which stood his image of solid gold, he constituted himself his own priest and worshipper, which is what a great many people do practically now, though they have not the means of proclaiming it to all the world as had Caligula. This was a form of oriental extravagance. On some of the monuments of Egypt we see Rameses the king offering his oblations to Rameses the god. The temple of the Dioscuri, the three graceful columns of which now rise above the exhumed forum, served as vestibule to his palace, and Caius would descend into the temple and seat himself between the statues of the divine brothers to receive along with them the adoration of the people.

Philo tells us the line of reason Caius pursued: 'If the shepherds are of a different order from the sheep they pasture, and the bullock-drivers from the cattle under their rods, then I must be distinct and superior in kind to the mortals I rule.' This notion, according to Dio, was put into his head by Herod Agrippa and Antiochus of Commagene.

He professed to be in constant communication with Jupiter Capitolinus, and would mutter as he walked, and pretend he was talking to the god, and hold his ear on one side and twist his brows with attention, and profess at such moments to be listening to the reply of the deity.

He assumed a beard of finely beaten gold thread, and passed along the streets thus adorned to be saluted as Jupiter; then he would appear with wings at his heels and adjusted to his cap, to represent Mercury; then with a bow and a quiver, his head surrounded by flashing rays, as Apollo. It was even said that he attempted to pass himself off, in appropriate costume, as one or other of the goddesses. But he was jealous of the supremacy of Jupiter, and he contrived a machine to rumble like thunder and emit flashes as lightning; then shouting, 'Kill me or I will kill thee!' he shot stones at the sky from a ballista.

The story—which if not true *e ben trovato*—is told that a Gaul once seeing him seated on a throne with his gold beard on, burst out laughing. Caius sent for him and asked, 'Do you know who I am?'

'Most certainly,' replied the barbarian, with homely honesty, 'you are an arrant fool.' 'Who is this man?' asked Caius. He was told that he was a cobbler. The would-be god waved him away. To take vengeance on a shoemaker was beneath his dignity.

The moon, he declared, was his wife, and when he could not sleep, in his nightly rambles in his porticos, where the white light lay in flakes, or in the garden where it lay in sheets as snow, he looked up at the silver orb, and maintained converse with her.

He went about surrounded by a train of attendants, who were dressed as the ministers of the deity he was pleased to personate at the time, and his gold statue was supplied with suits of clothes which were changed daily to correspond with those worn by Caligula.

He ordered the most famous statues to be brought from Greece, and then removed their heads and substituted his own for theirs. He desired Memmius Regulus, whose wife he had carried off, to send him the Zeus of Phidias, and was told in reply that lightning had fallen and consumed the vessel destined to transport the statue to Italy, and that laughter echoed from the pedestal when the workmen approached to remove it. It was happy for Regulus that the emperor died shortly after, otherwise he would have paid with his life for his lack of zeal.

Caius enrolled his own uncle Claudius and many of the chief men of the senate among the priests of the college for the worship of his august self. The sacrifices offered before his image were rare birds, pheasants, and peacocks. The obsequious senate ordered the erection of another temple to him in the city, and he commanded the elevation of a vast shrine to himself at Miletus that might serve as a place of pilgrimage to all Asia. The Alexandrian Greeks, with their usual levity, proved most eager to adopt this new cult. Only the Jews refused to do homage to the new god, and accordingly fell into disfavour. The Alexandrians with the enthusiasm of those who rush into extravagances in religion, fell on the Jews because they refused to pay divine honours to the images of Caius, plundered and burnt their houses, and subjected many to tortures and death. Orders were issued requiring instant submission. The Jews of Alexandria determined to send an embassy to the prince to explain the impossibility of their rendering to his representations the honour they considered to be due to God alone. Philo, the distinguished scholar, who strove to reconcile the books of Moses with the teachings of Plato, was commissioned to head the deputation, and to his pen we owe a most graphic and interesting account of the embassy. 'No other fragment of ancient history, excepting perhaps the fourth of Juvenal's *Satires*, gives us so near an insight into the actual domestic life of the rulers of the world; and though the style of Philo is laborious and turgid, and the character of his mind such as to engage little confidence in his judgment or even in

his statements of fact, nevertheless we cannot rise from its perusal without feeling that we have made a personal acquaintance, to use the words of another sophist, with "the kind of beast called a tyrant."'[1]

The account of the introduction of the deputation to the emperor is too curious not to be given with some fulness.

When the embassy reached Rome they sought an immediate interview, for the distress under which their brethren were labouring rendered relief urgent. Their first meeting with the emperor was as he was walking in the gardens of Agrippina, that opened on the Campus Martius. They made their obeisance and he waved his hand in acknowledgment, and sent the officer to them whose function it was to introduce embassies, with the message, 'I will hear what you have to say on the first occasion.'

Then off went the emperor to Puteoli, and the Jews had to follow him. He was about to pay a visit of inspection to his numerous villas on the Neapolitan bay, and they were dragged along in his train, buoyed up with vain hopes of an interview. In the meantime they did their best to disarm the opposition of the favourite, Helicon, a freedman of the late emperor, who had been bought by the agents of the Alexandrians to oppose the Jews. 'Helicon attended and courted Caius night and day, never leaving him for a moment . . . he was with him everywhere, playing ball, in the palaestrum, in the baths, at table; he was chamberlain, and attended him when he went to rest. This charge gave him undivided access to the ear of the emperor. Caius neglected the affairs of state that he might delight himself with the buffooneries of Helicon. This man skilfully mingled sneers against us interwoven with his fooleries, so as to amuse the prince and to injure us at one and the same time. The jokes which seemed to be his main preoccupation were in fact a pretext, and the accusations which seemed to slip out inadvertently were what he was in reality intent on.'[2]

Whilst Philo and the rest of his deputies were thus running after the erratic prince, a messenger came to them to tell them that orders had been given for the erection of a colossal statue of Caligula in the Holy of Holies at Jerusalem. 'Stupified with this news, we remained riveted to the spot, silent, our hearts failing us, and our strength leaving us.' A consultation was held, but nothing was done. Nothing indeed could be done without an audience. The account of the deputation to Caius is fragmentary. Philo goes back to narrate what had taken place at Jerusalem, then comes a break, and then abruptly ensues the account of the interview at last obtained. 'When we approached him we could see by his look, by his movements, that we were before—not a judge, but an accuser, and a more embittered enemy than the rest.

[1] Merivale, *Hist. of Romans*, v. 47.

[2] I have had to condense the very lengthy account of Philo, not only in this passage but in those that follow.

Caius behaved towards us with tyrannical insolence and monstrous arrogance, and despised all those measures taken by judges who seek to deal justly.

'Caius summoned the two managers of the gardens of Maecenas and of Lamia which adjoin, and are near the city (on the Esquiline). He spent three or four days there. It was there that the drama was to be played, in our presence, which was to decide the fate of our entire nation! He had given orders that his villas should be thrown open. It was his intention to visit them in order. We were led before him. On reaching his presence we prostrated ourselves to the earth, with the marks of the highest respect, and saluted him with the names of Autocrat and Sebastos. He returned our salutations with an air that made us fear not only for our cause but for our lives. Grinding his teeth, he said to us with an insolent air: "Are you those people, enemies of the gods, who alone among men refuse to acknowledge my divinity, despise me and prefer the worship of your nameless God to that of myself?" At the same time he raised his hands to heaven and uttered a blasphemy which it is not permitted us to repeat.

'Our enemies, the rival deputies, were sure of their triumph when Caius thus spoke. Transported with joy, they heaped on him the names of all the gods. Isidorus, vile calumniator, seeing him intoxicated with this homage, that raised him above humanity, said, "My Lord! you would hate these men the more if you knew all their detestation and irreverence towards yourself. When the whole human race offered sacrifices for your recovery, they alone refused. I do not mean these fellows here present only, I speak of all Jews." We cried out with one voice, "Lord Caius, we are calumniated! we did sacrifice and shed blood at our altar for you, not once only but many times." "So it may be," answered he, "but your sacrifices were offered to another and not to me." We shuddered to hear him speak thus.

'This went on whilst he was running about from one of his villas to another, visiting the apartments for men, those for women, examining the floors, the ceilings, finding fault here and there, and giving orders that improvements should be made to render all more splendid. We followed him up and down, a butt for his jokes and the insults of our adversaries, just as in a farce in a theatre. And in verity, it was a sort of broad comedy, in which the judge takes the place of accuser, and the accusers take the part of a bad judge, and all justice is thrown aside and rancour rules the day. When a judge, and that an all-powerful one, attacks, silence is necessary, it even becomes a means of defence. That was the sole possible course for us, for we could not answer the accusations he poured on us; fear lest we should see our laws and our people destroyed held our tongues mute.

'When he had given orders relative to the alterations he desired, he turned on us with the question, "Why do you not eat pig?" This pro-

voked a great guffaw from our adversaries; some because their malevolence was gratified; others, in hopes of currying favour, applauded, as though he had said something very clever and witty. This was carried so far that the officers of the palace showed themselves annoyed, and pointed out that this noise was hardly consonant with the respect due to an emperor, in whose presence only a smile was permissible in a very intimate acquaintance.

'We replied to Caius relative to eating pig, that the customs of various countries differed. Some one threw in the observation that there were people who did not eat lamb. "And quite right too!" said Caius, laughing. "It is poor stuff." Seeing ourselves the sport of sarcasm and impertinence we remained speechless.

'Then the emperor burst forth in an explosion of rage. "I would like," said he, "to know your customs and your political organisation." We began to explain them to him, as he desired; but he—not waiting to listen to what we had to say—dashed into the large house he was near. He went all through it, and ordered all the windows to be filled with clear crystal-like stone (talc), which would let in light, but exclude the wind and the glare of the sun. Then, becoming calmer, he came back to us and said in a milder tone, "What were you saying?"

'Again we attempted to explain to him what he had asked to be informed about, and again off he darted, to run into another house and order some paintings for the walls. Seeing our pleading thus drawn out, interrupted, chopped up, we were overcome with despair. We were driven nearly mad, and expected death. Our anguish of heart was an appeal to the true God, who heard, and had pity on us, and turned the heart of the emperor to clemency. Caius relaxed in his humour, and said, "After all, these idiots seem to me to be more deserving of pity than of punishment because they do not believe that I partake of the divine nature." Thereupon he left us and bade us be dismissed.'

This graphic picture fully confirms what we gather from Suetonius relative to the mind of Caius. Drunk with flattery, and with sudden succession to absolute power, his mind enervated by debauchery, his brain disturbed by the sickness that had fallen on him in the first year of his reign, and with insanity hereditary in his family, he was a mere creature of his passions, without steadiness of purpose, played on by any designing man who gained his ear.

Philo corroborates what the historians tell us of his extravagances. 'He had suddenly changed his mode of life from the frugal regimen maintained under Tiberius to sumptuous luxury. He abandoned himself to wine and gluttony; though he gorged, he could not satisfy his appetite. He took baths at the wrong times. Fresh orgies succeeded to his vomiting, in which meat and wine combined to stimulate him. Then came other excesses, all noxious to body and mind, and calculated to

snap the links that bound them together. . . . After his recovery from sickness he was transformed into a cruel tyrant, or rather he showed openly those inclinations which he had hitherto covered with a veil of hypocrisy.' Then he goes on to relate the murders of Tiberius Gemellus, of Macro and Ennia, and of Silanus, and proceeds to speak of Caius affecting to be a god, summing in himself all the characteristics of the many pagan deities. In a curious passage, and a very astonishing one to find in the mouth of a Jew, he speaks in glowing terms of the good done by the demi-gods, and contrasts with it the evil done by Caius. He speaks of his murders, his exile of his sisters, of his 'iron heart and pitiless soul.' 'Hast thou imitated Bacchus who filled the world with joy by his discoveries? Thou, Caius, hast indeed made inventions, but as a reprobate, to be the plague of mankind. Hast thou not turned joy into sorrow, and pleasure into mourning? Everywhere thou hast embittered life to all. Thou hast swept off to thyself the wealth of others, thrust on by thy insatiable greed. Thou sendest the abominable seed of thy malignant soul into the desolated provinces, to be the ruin of the human kind.

'Hast thou by thy great labours and deeds imitated Hercules, thou, the most cowardly and trembling of men? Thou who hast robbed all regions of the empire of the tranquillity and the prosperity they enjoyed.

'Why were wings put on the heels of Mercury but to show his agility as the announcer of good tidings? And the caduceus is put into his hand because his part is that of a pacifier. But what need had Caius for wings to his heels? Was it to publish everywhere his villainies that ought to be enveloped in eternal silence? Did he need celerity? He could produce crime on crime on one spot. Why the caduceus? There is not a family, not a city which he has not filled with trouble and civil war.

'What has he to do with Apollo? He who has massacred those unhappy men whose wealth he coveted, whom he was not content with robbing, but he must also have their blood.'

The ideas put into his head by Herod Agrippa worked there; he had probably been told by his friend of the great bridge that crossed the Tyropoean Valley, connecting Mount Zion, the Palatine of Jerusalem, with Mount Moriah, the Jewish Capitol. He resolved to rival and outdo it. A vast bridge was by his orders constructed, to extend from his palace to the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus. It crossed the Velabrum and threw an arch over the temple of Augustus. It is thought that traces of the spring of this arch are still observable in the great cliff of masonry that rises above Sta. Maria Liberatrice. He needed this bridge, said Caligula, in order that he and his brother Jupiter might have ready communication with each other.

I may here quote the lines of Mr. J. B. B. Nichols, in *Love's Looking-Glass*, on the basalt bust in the Capitoline Museum :—

'Being in torment, how should he be still?
The slim neck twists; the eyes beneath the wide
Bent Claudian brows[1] shrink proud and terrified;
Along the beardless cheek the muscles thrill
Like smitten lute-strings. Can no strength of will
Silence this presence ever at his side,
This hateful voice, that will not be denied,
That talks with him, and mutters "kill" and "kill"?

O dust and shade, O dazed and fighting brain,
O dead old world that shuddered at his nod!
Only this iron stone endures, and thence
Looks forth a soul in everlasting pain,
The ghost of Caesar, maniac and god,
And loathes the weakness of Omnipotence.'

Caius had inaugurated his reign by showing the same deference to the senate that had been observed by Tiberius, but it was not for long. He had spoken against his predecessor and encouraged the expression of popular dislike to his memory; but all at once, in mad caprice, he turned round and began to praise him. One day he entered the senate and read to it a lengthy lecture. For himself, said he, as he was Caesar, he was at liberty to find fault with Tiberius, but that senators should venture to do this was an act of temerity deserving of chastisement. Who were those who had died by the hand of the executioner in the preceding reign?—not victims of Tiberius, but such as had been tried, condemned, and handed over to execution by the senate. 'Either,' said Caius, with remorseless truth, 'you did wrong to honour him in his lifetime by your decrees, or you have erred now in blaming him. You have taught me by this what to expect of you.'

After having continued awhile in the same strain, relative to the deaths of his mother and brothers, he affected to bring Tiberius himself on the stage, to address him in these terms: 'All you have said, Caius, is very true and appropriate; so my advice to you is, Do not trouble yourself with attempting to win the love of the senate. Do not spare them; they hate you. They wish for your death, and if they had the power they would kill you. Do not think of trying to win their favour, and do not trouble your head about anything they may say. Think only of your own security; whatever conduces to that end is lawful, thus you will have nothing to fear. You will enjoy yourself to the full; they will be forced to do you reverence whether they like it or not. If you seek their affection, you seek a vain reputation and lose the grasp upon solid power, and it will lead to your falling into the traps they will lay for you. No one in the world submits voluntarily. A prince is honoured only so long as he is feared; if he ceases to have power, let him die.'

This speech, astounding in its frankness, was but the echo of what

[1] A singular blunder. The bent brows are derived from Agrippa.

he had heard dinned into his ears in the lifetime of Tiberius; not by Tiberius, but by the two Oriental princes, his bosom friends, Herod Agrippa and Antiochus of Commagene.

He at once restored the laws of high treason under which so many victims had fallen in the late reign, and which he had abrogated, then he abruptly left the senate-house. Silence fell upon the conscript fathers; they looked in each other's faces in blank dismay. Hardly one among them had not launched forth invectives against the late emperor. So dazed and frightened were the senators that they separated without a word. On the morrow, however, they assembled in a crowd to lick the hand that smote them—the hand of a cowardly, truculent young ruffian of twenty-six, who in a thunderstorm hid himself quaking under his bed.

The senate passed by acclamation a vote of thanks to Caesar for his graciousness in allowing them to enjoy their lives, after having administered to them such just reprimands. They ordered that the day when this oration was made should be held memorable with sacrifices for ever. And these were the men who sighed for the restoration of the old Republic!

But it was not the senate alone that incurred the resentment of the young tyrant. He was no better pleased with the populace that he had likewise courted in the first months of his reign.

He had begun with shows in the circus and the amphitheatre, and, an unusual sight, had himself as prince presided. This contrast to the demeanour of the late emperor called forth the liveliest enthusiasm. But the time came when the people would willingly have been spared the honour of his presence. Caius was especially fond of chariot races, and he knocked down some arches of the aqueduct which brought the virgin water into the city, in order to make way for a racecourse. The rival charioteers were adorned with distinguishing colours—red, blue, green, and white, representing the four seasons—and the people enlisted themselves on the sides of their favourites with an ardour that at times threatened the peace of the city. The emperor himself favoured the green or vernal faction. He frequented the stables of his favourite grooms and racers, and rewarded with profusion the successful drivers when they belonged to his green party. He sought to give singularity to the races, and add to their brilliancy, and so had the course strewn with vermilion.

An assiduous spectator at the games, he became furious when the public applauded the drivers that were other than his own colour, and sulky if they did not fill all the benches at the races. A war of cross-purposes ensued. The people refused to cheer his green charioteers; and then, weary of the shows, remained away. But after a while the fickle populace, tired of abstention, reappeared; and Caius, to reward them, scattered among the crowd a multitude of tickets, on which were written the names of objects, to which he who obtained one of these

tickets might put in a claim. On one occasion when in the circus the people shouted, 'Down with the delators!' Caius rose in anger and went away into Campania, where he remained in a fit of sulks till the feast of the new goddess Drusilla, for which he came back to Rome.

The gladiatorial shows were also given with frequency and extravagance, and the restrictions imposed by Augustus on the number sent into the arena to butcher each other were swept away. It was the delight of Caius to witness, not the dexterous fence of single pairs of swordsmen, but the promiscuous struggling together of armed bands. It was not sufficient that professional gladiators and criminals should hack and slay each other in public, on various pretences; he compelled freedmen and nobles to expose themselves in these horrible contests; and on one occasion he presented as many as six-and-twenty knights together. One knight, who for some offence had been ordered to be exposed to wild beasts in the arena, cried out that he was innocent. The emperor summoned him to the imperial box, had his tongue cut out, and then sent him back to be finished by the tigers. As a variety to the monotony of the spectacles, he had the writer of a farce burned alive in the midst of the amphitheatre because he suspected that certain lines in the play were levelled at him. He condescended occasionally himself to enter the arena. On one such occasion he contended with a gladiator, who parried all the blows of his assailant and forbore inflicting a wound. When Caius was exhausted and weary, the gladiator knelt to ask his forgiveness. The young ruffian at once seized the opportunity to stab him, and then, flourishing a palm-branch, declared himself the victor in the games. On one occasion, when the number of criminals condemned to fight with beasts was insufficient, he suddenly commanded some of the spectators to be dragged from the benches into the arena and opposed defenceless to the lions.

'When flesh was to be had only at a high price for feeding the wild beasts reserved for the spectacles, he ordered that criminals should be given to them to be devoured, and upon inspecting the accused in a row, whilst he stood in the portico, without troubling himself to examine their cases, he ordered all to be dragged away without distinction. After disfiguring many persons of honourable rank, by branding them in the face with hot irons, he condemned them to the mines, or to work at the repairs of the high roads, or to fight with wild beasts; or else, tying them by the neck and heels, he would shut them up in cages, or saw them asunder. He compelled parents to witness the execution of their sons; and to one who excused himself on the plea of indisposition, he sent his own litter. Another he invited to his table immediately after he had witnessed the spectacle, and coolly challenged him to jest and be merry.'[1]

[1] Suet. *Calig.* 27.

IV.—THE MADMAN.

In his famous proclamation to the senate which was registered in its acts Caius had frankly declared his intentions to rule by fear.

'There is nothing in myself I find so admirable,' said he, 'as my inflexible rigour.' To express this, in his busts he was represented as frowning, and with his head turned with a peculiarly savage air on one side, an attitude afterwards adopted by Caracalla.

If we were to judge of Caius by his busts and statues, we should say that he had a face of considerable beauty. Yet from the description of his personal appearance given us by Suetonius we would not have expected this. As already said, there is a difficulty about the identification of these portraits. For Caius struck few medals, and those he did strike have not on them heads that are sufficiently characteristic to enable us, as in the case of Augustus and Tiberius, to fix his likeness with anything like certainty. Now, among the statues and busts that are found in the museums is a whole series of portraits resembling each other more or less, which are all certainly the likenesses of the same young man. The face bears some resemblance to the young Augustus,[1] and is certainly the portrait of one of the Julian family. It is not, however, that of Octavius, for it differs from it in shape of head, as well as in other particulars, and there is absolutely no one else whom we can conceive that it represents. The busts of Caligula we know were very numerous. If these be not they—then what has become of them all, and for whom can these portraits be intended? The typical Caligula portrait, by which all have been determined, is the wonderfully preserved green basaltic bust in the Capitol, that is not only absolutely without a flaw, but has also preserved its epidermis and polish in an astonishing degree, so much so, indeed, that it has been doubted whether it can be of classic, and is not of Renaissance work. But this bust has been in existence for some time,[2] and since its first recorded appearance many more busts have been found all bearing a close resemblance to it. That it is a Renaissance forgery is highly improbable; for a Renaissance sculptor who wanted to create an ideal Caligula would certainly have gone to Suetonius for inspiration; and this portrait does not agree with the conception of Caius we get from this writer, though it does with a second bust of white marble, also in the Capitoline Museum, found since the time of Winckelmann, with one in the Villa Albani with veil over the back of the head,

[1] The people apparently noticed the resemblance, for Suetonius tells us that they were wont to call him 'the young Augustus.'

[2] It existed in the time of Winckelmann and of Bottari (middle of last century). The fact of its preservation of gloss is not extraordinary. That of Commodus as Hercules in the Palace of the Conservatori is far more highly polished, and is of marble only, whereas this of Caius is of the harder basalt.

with a bronze bust at Turin, with a statue found at Minturnae, and a head from Cervetri in the Vatican, as well as with others whose genuineness has been questioned.

This is the description of Caligula as given by Suetonius:—'He was tall, of a pale complexion, ill-shaped, his neck and legs very slender, his eyes and temples sunken, his brows broad and knit, his hair thin, and the crown of his head bald. The rest of his body was much covered with hair. On this account it was reckoned a capital crime for any person to look down from above, as he was passing by, or so much as to mention a goat. His countenance, which was naturally hideous and frightful, he purposely rendered more so, forming it before a mirror into the most horrible contortions. He was crazy both in body and mind, having been subject when a boy to epileptic attacks.'

It will be seen at once that this description would never have led a Renaissance artist to excogitate by its help such a Caligula as the basalt head. Besides, the existence of a number of similar portraits excludes this idea. That in the statues and busts we have not the spindly legs and the thin neck, nor the bald pate in the prematurely oldened boy, is not surprising, as he would have resented a reproduction of his deformities with a sentence of execution, and sculptors would moreover be inclined to avoid what was inartistic. For the same reason, they disguised the sunken temples by locks of hair drawn down between the brow and the ears; the 'naturally hideous and frightful' countenance described by Suetonius probably signifies the expression assumed, and not any malformation of feature. Indeed, it is difficult to suppose that Caius could have been other than well moulded in feature when his sisters were so beautiful, and his mother was so fine a woman; his father also was a very good-looking man; indeed, the only strain of unaristocratic blood would come from Agrippa, from whom he inherited the overhanging brow, and the sharp curve under the lower lip; but Agrippa had a fine profile. If the portrait in the Vatican I have given as Agrippina be rightly identified, then the frown on the brow of Caius came to him through his mother, who also had it from Vipsanius Agrippa, his grandfather; and there was no lapse in the continuity of the peculiarity.

As already said, there is a family likeness in Caius to Augustus, but Caius has not the brain formation of Octavius, and his face is longer, the upper lip projects more, and has in it a more pronounced channel. The chin of Caius is not as finely formed, and has a dint in the middle, which appears also in the chin of his sister Agrippina (Fig. 109). The profile of brow and nose almost in a line is rather that of Vipsanius Agrippa than that of Augustus.

On the Capitoline bust of Caligula in basalt M. Ampère observes: 'The features of Caligula are regular and beautiful; but all his portraits give him a violent and sinister expression, a true image of his cruel and disturbed mind. One recognises the *frons lata et torva*, the broad and

sombre brow spoken of by Suetonius; one reads in his face the *natura saeva et probrosa* of the same author, and the *turbata mens*, the troubled intellect, of Tacitus. Moreover, we know that he laboured to give his features a ferocious expression. Nowhere is this expression more striking than in the basalt bust of the Capitol. This black stone hardened by fire was well fitted to be moulded to reproduce the implacable hardness, the ardent ferocity, and the nigritude of the soul of Caligula.' M. Mayor says of it: 'A denunciatory bust. All evil instincts are mirrored in it. The jaw is strong; asymmetry is apparent. Ears thrown out from the head. Head turned; expression sardonic and cruel. Upper lip drawn up on one side like that of a beast when about to bite. Darwin has pointed out this characteristic as a token of atavism. Asymmetry of the eyes and of the eyebrows. The left eye higher than the other, and further from the nose.'[1]

In the statue at Naples, found at Minturnae, where the head had served for boatmen to attach their boats to it, there is the same irregularity in the eyes; the mouth is distorted through epilepsy. This head has been too much restored to be relied on as a portrait. The nose is entirely new.

On the Uffizi bust, M. Mayor says: 'The expression is sinister, cruel, bad-tempered, saturnine, mistrustful. It is the face of a man subject to epileptic fits. There is a threatening contraction in the angle of the upper lip. Yet this is evidently an idealised portrait.'

Viktor Rydberg thus describes the basalt bust: 'The head is turned slightly aside, the brow thunders, the eyes lighten, the fine mouth is pressed wrathfully and scornfully together; but one can see at once that this look is counterfeited or practised: it is still the theatrical tyrant only, with features arranged for his part.' Rydberg says of the several portraits, beginning with this and ending in one in the Villa Borghese, 'they are milestones along the road to villainy.'

Caius was constitutionally timid; at the slightest sound of thunder he would wrap his head in a mantle to hide the glare of lightning from his eyes, and muffle the mutter of thunder to his ears. If the storm was bad, he would creep under his bed. Once he visited Sicily, but was so frightened by the fire and smoke from Mount Etna that he ran away in the night. When in Germany, being in a narrow defile, a companion happening to remark that were the enemy to attempt a surprise they would be easily able to crush the Roman invader, Caius jumped on a horse and galloped back without drawing rein to the Rhine, where, finding the bridge over the river crowded with camp-followers and baggage-carriers, he insisted on being passed along over their heads to the further bank.

'In the fashion of his clothes, shoes, and all the rest of his dress,

[1] There is in the busts of the Julian family a remarkable irregularity in the eyes. No Renais-ance sculptor would purposely have made these irregularities.

he did not wear what was either national or properly civic, or peculiar to the male sex, or appropriate to mere mortals. He often appeared abroad in a short coat of stout cloth, richly embroidered and blazing with jewels, in a tunic with sleeves, and with bracelets on his arms; sometimes in silks, and habited like a woman; at other times with buskins; sometimes in the sort of shoes used by the light-armed soldiers, or in the sock affected by women. He wore very commonly the triumphal ornaments, and sometimes the breastplate of Alexander the Great, taken out of his coffin.'

He had a favourite horse called Incitatus, or 'Go-ahead.' 'The day before the Circensian games, he would send soldiers to enjoin silence in the neighbourhood of the stables, lest the sleep of his steed should be disturbed. For this beast he had made a marble stall, an ivory manger, purple housings, and a jewelled frontlet. He, moreover, appointed for it a house with a retinue of slaves, and fine furniture, for the reception of such as were invited in the name of his horse to supper with him. It is even said that he intended to make him a consul.' Dio says he did make of his horse priest to his temple. If Caius were mad this is all possible enough; if not, it may be the mere exaggeration of gossip. Caius, however, was in age hardly a man. In the wantonness of enjoyment of supreme power, after a youth of severe restraint alternating with indulgence, it would be hard to say that any folly would be too great for him to commit. In his truculent mood he delighted to insult the Roman nobility, and there was a certain grim humour in him that might prompt him to such an outrage as the nomination of a horse to be consul.

'However we may interpret it,' says Viktor Rydberg, 'Caligula's mental growth was undoubtedly dwarfed. It seems to me as if the furious worker of violence had throughout his life something of the child remaining—nay, all except its innocence and amiability. Out of these qualities he grew early. But he had the child's entire lack of knowledge of itself, its leaning towards the adventurous and fanciful, its eagerness to prove the extent of its powers, its inability to grasp the reason for the existence of other wills, its impulse to destroy, and to create without purpose. There is something *naïf*, something of the simple security of nature, in his most shameful misdeeds. He was a pestilent boy who had got the world and mankind for playthings, and at their expense gave a loose rein to his mischievous humour. He was never able altogether to recover from astonishment at the vastness of his power.'

This characterisation is, I believe, most true. Suetonius and Dio tell us of his misdeeds, of his extravagances, but do not understand the nature of the monster they depict. Rydberg hits him off with a masterstroke. He was a man with a stunted intellect, who never was able to rise to understand that he had duties to perform. His masquerading

as a god or a goddess was the folly of a child; his barbarities were the wantonness of a child, that does not realise the pain it is giving, or the gravity of its acts; his cowardice was the timidity of a child; his love of games and shows was the delight of a child in amusements; his treatment of senate and people, now humouring them, now insulting them, was the caprice of a child.

Perhaps the most extravagant toy with which Caius played was his bridge of boats across the Baian Gulf, from Bauli to Puteoli, a distance of about two miles. From Puteoli he constructed a mole built on arches, the remains of which may still be seen extending twelve hundred feet into the sea. On the further side of the bay is a spit of land that projects into the waves. Vipsanius Agrippa, the grandfather of Caius, had thrown up a mole in the depth of this bay to enclose the Lucrine lake against the sea, cut a channel between it and the lake Avernus, and had converted them into two basins of an excellent harbour. Perhaps the freak took Caius that he would surpass the work of his grandfather; perhaps he believed a prophecy that had been made when he was at Capreae that he would not be an emperor unless he could ride across the gulf dryshod; perhaps he would excel Hercules, whose attributes he assumed, and who was fabled to have cast up the sandbank, utilised by Agrippa in the construction of his sea-dyke. Caius 'ransacked the havens far and near to collect every vessel he could lay hands on, till commerce was straitened in every quarter, and Italy itself threatened with famine. These vessels he yoked together side by side in a double line, extending from one shore to the other. On this broad and well-compacted base he placed an enormous platform of timber; this again he covered with earth, and paved after the manner of a military high road, with stones hewn and laid in cement. The way thus built was furnished with numerous stations and post-houses, for the use of which fresh water was conveyed by an aqueduct from the continent. Such, it seems, was this extraordinary bridge: it could never have been intended to retain it permanently; it was doubtless necessary to restore the vessels which had been pressed into the service of the prince's vanity; but he determined, before abandoning his work, to enact on it a peculiar pageant, the novelty and brilliancy of which should transcend every recorded phantasy of kings or emperors. He declared that he would drive across the bay, not alone in his chariot, but attended by an army, and arrayed as an emperor indeed. The great world of Rome mustered on the shores around to witness the imperial miracle. From Puteoli to Misenum the semicircle of the bay was crowded with admiring multitudes; the loungers of the baths and porticos sallied forth from their cool retreats; the promenaders of the Lucrine beach checked their palanquins and chariots, and hushed the strains of their delicious symphonies; the terraces of the gorgeous villas which lined the coast,

A.U.C. 792.
A.D. 39.
Aet. 27.

and breasted the fresh and sparkling ripple, glittered with streamers of a thousand colours, and with the bright array of senators and matrons, drowning the terrors which day and night beset them in shrieks of childish admiration. The clang of martial music echoed from shore to shore. From Bauli the emperor descended upon the bridge, arrayed in a coat of mail, adorned with precious gems, which had been worn by Alexander the Great, with his sword by his side, his shield on his arm, and crowned with a chaplet of oak leaves. On horseback, followed by a dense column of soldiers, he traversed the solid footway, and charged into Puteoli as a conquering foe. There he indulged his victorious army with a day of rest and expectation. On the morrow he placed himself in a triumphal car and drove back exulting, in the garb of a charioteer of the Green at the games of the Circus. The mock triumph was adorned by pretended captures, represented by some royal hostages from Parthia, at the time in custody of the Roman government. The army followed in long procession. In the centre of the bridge the emperor halted and addressed an harangue to his soldiers on the greatness of their victory, from a tribunal erected for the purpose. He contrasted the narrow stream of the Bosphorus and the Hellespont, at most seven stadia in width, with the broad ocean which he had yoked in chains, and declared that the exploits of Xerxes and Darius were trifles compared with his mightier enterprise.[1]

'After wearying himself and his hearers with this prodigious folly, he distributed money among them, and invited them to a banquet. At this entertainment the emperor retained his place on the bridge, but the soldiers were collected around him, for the most part in vessels. It extended far into the night, and at nightfall the bridge and the ships were illuminated with torches, and at the signal the whole curving line of coast shone forth, as in a theatre, with innumerable lights. Charmed with the stillness of the water, and the brilliancy reflected upon it, the populace crowded round in boats, and partook of the mirth and festivity. But their holiday did not end without a frightful disaster, many of the spectators on the boats or on the bridge being jostled accidentally into the waves. Those who fell, and those who might have saved them, were, it seems, equally intoxicated: the light was uncertain; no one gave, or none received, orders; and the emperor himself, we are told, was overcome with wine; whether drunk or sober, it is not impossible that he enjoyed the horror of the scene, and even forbade assistance to be rendered to the sufferers.'[2]

The inordinate vanity of Caius made him resent any one being thought to be better than himself in any way. In his insensate jealousy, he forbade the Pompeii to bear the name of Magnus, and

[1] It is noteworthy that his mind runs on the exploits of Oriental tyrants, and shows that the ideas infused by Herod were still working.

[2] Merivale, *History of Romans*, v. 64-8.

FIG. 87.—CAIUS. Statue in the Mus. Nation., Naples. Found at Minturnae.

the Torquati to wear their golden torques, and the Cincinnati to flourish a curl on their temples, as hereditary badges of their illustrious families. When Ptolemy, son of king Juba, and his own cousin, whom he had invited to Rome, entered the theatre in his purple robe of royalty, all the spectators rose to stare at him. This so stirred the bile of Caius that he had him put to death. Envious of men with abundant heads of hair, as his own crop was falling out, he would suddenly order any such men whom he noticed in his way to be swept off to the barber's and have half their heads shaved. There was in Rome a very tall man, who went by the name of the Colossus. Caius observing him in the amphitheatre, ordered him to be dragged from his seat and thrust into the arena, and forced to contend with a gladiator, and when he proved more than a match for this man, then with a second. On his worsting this opponent also, he commanded the tall fellow to be bound, clothed in rags, and drawn up and down the streets, 'and after being exhibited in this sorry plight to the women, to be then butchered.' There was, says Suetonius, no man of however mean a condition whom he did not envy, if that man were suspected of any excellency which might excite his envy. A volunteer gladiator who fought in a light chariot had so distinguished himself that he was applauded by the people vociferously. Caligula was so incensed that any other man than himself should meet with such acclamations, that he started from his seat, and in his haste treading on the fringe of his toga, fell sprawling down the steps. He gathered himself up, convulsed with rage, and went away, shouting to the assembled crowd of spectators, 'A people who are masters of the world pay greater honour to a gladiator than to princes admitted among the gods, or to my own majesty here present in their midst!'

There was a certain Domitius Afer,[1] a man of note as an orator. He had impeached Claudia Pulchra, the friend of Agrippina the elder, and cousin to Caius. But this the young emperor perhaps forgot. What moved his wrath was hearing Domitius extolled as the most eloquent of pleaders. Now Domitius had erected a statue of the emperor, with an inscription recording his age (twenty-seven), and the fact that he was twice consul. Caius thereupon himself impeached Domitius in a set speech as attempting to sneer at his sacred majesty by alluding to his youth, and, in conjunction with it, stating that he had been consul in contravention to the laws which fixed the age at which men were eligible for the consulship.

The entire senate was assembled to hear the charge of Caius against the great orator. When the emperor had done, Domitius adroitly declined to exculpate himself. After hearing such a denunciation, in terms so eloquent, uttered with such consummate mastery of words,

[1] He was a native of Nemausus (Nimes). He died of over-eating himself in the principate of Nero, and Pliny gives some details about his will, *Epist.* vii. 18.

with such grace of declamation, he declared that nothing was left him but to throw himself in tears at the feet of his accuser, and appeal to his mercy. Caius was so elated at the thought that he had silenced the greatest speaker in the senate that he did not press the accusation.

Some one afterwards in confidence remarked that it would have been as well for him not to have attacked Domitius. 'Would you have had me throw away the chance of making such a splendid speech?' answered Caligula, and soon after he rewarded Domitius for his adroit flattery by appointing him consul.

Among the favourites of the emperor was a young Roman noble of the ancient and illustrious Aemilian race, one of which had been triumvir along with Augustus and Antony, at the division of the world. This was Marcus Aemilius Lepidus. It galled this man to think that the descendant of Augustus and of Antony had come to power, whereas the Aemilii Lepidi had remained without any advancement. But he kept his counsel and united with Caius in his revels, and was rewarded with the hand of Drusilla, his youngest sister; she, however, was snatched from him immediately by Caius, without however formally dissolving the union.

When the emperor fell ill in the first year of his reign, he bequeathed his inheritance and the succession to the empire to his sister Drusilla; and as Drusilla was still the legal wife of Lepidus, had the emperor died, he might have looked to succeed him by virtue of his marriage to Drusilla. But Caius recovered and Drusilla died. Lepidus saw himself disappointed in his hopes, hopes the more confident as the prince was at that time childless, and the next claimant, Tiberius Gemellus, had been put to death.

This disappointment was more than Lepidus could brook; and he formed plans to remove out of his way, by violent means, the young Caesar, who was alienating from him the senators and capitalists by his insults, and the people by his taxes.

As we have not the account of Tacitus we are left very much in the dark relative to a good deal that took place in this reign, but so much we do know that Lepidus won the promise of assistance from Gaetulicus, who stood at the head of the legions in Germany, and was much beloved by them. In the plot were also involved the two sisters of the emperor, Agrippina and Julia. Agrippina was married to Domitius Ahenobarbus, but he was old and failing, and she was in the bloom of youth, and fired with ambition. Lepidus for his plans required a princess of the imperial house as his wife, if he was to claim the throne, and inheritance of the Julian family; and Agrippina, on her side, required a man of rank and influence, that she might attain to the goal she kept in view. Already, contrary to Roman precedent, the women of Julian blood were claiming, or were allowed, a right and place of their own, independent of those of their husbands. Everything seemed to favour

the conspirators. Cornelius Lentulus Gaetulicus had been so long at his post, and had treated his soldiers with so much consideration, that he could calculate on their standing by him, and the legions on the Lower Rhine were under the command of his brother-in-law Apronius; they also could be reckoned on.

But Caligula was possessed of that cunning that goes with derangement of intellect. He suspected that an intrigue was being carried on between his eldest sister and his favourite. He was probably warned that dissatisfaction was rife in the German legions, and that sedition was being there industriously fomented. He resolved to go into Germany himself, and to take his sisters and Lepidus along with him.

On his way through Gaul he took every possible means, not scrupling to have recourse to the basest, to get the threads of the conspiracy into his hands, and finally succeeded in obtaining the correspondence of all involved. Thereupon the blow fell.

Lepidus and Gaetulicus were arrested and executed. Gaetulicus was cut down at the command of the emperor by a military tribune named Dexter. Strangely enough, Caius spared the lives of his sisters, perhaps scrupling to have the sacred blood of the Julian race shed; perhaps because the sisters were not sufficiently compromised in the plot to entitle him to put them to death. He contented himself with having them impeached on a side charge—probably a false one—of adultery, and sentenced to banishment. All their goods were confiscated, and Caius had their furniture, their statuary, their trinkets, their slaves transported into Gaul and sold by auction to rich provincials under his own eyes. Among the articles thus put under the hammer were a number of mementos of the Emperor Augustus, and at the auction Caius himself narrated the history, or pointed out the rarity, of such articles, so as to stimulate the purchasers to bid high for them.

'See,' said he, 'this is a vase; and this a statue that Antony sent from Egypt. Here, again, is a gem, or a picture which the divine Augustus brought from the East. This was a trophy of my father's; and that was a trinket that belonged to my mother.'

To fill up the measure of his shameless meanness, he at the same time published the correspondence of his sisters with their lovers or admirers. To the temple of Mars the Avenger he sent a dagger, which he pretended had been destined for his own heart by the conspirators.

The princesses were decreed to have lost all their hereditary honours, and were sent for confinement to the Ponza Isles. A similar fate befell one of those involved in their intrigues, Sophonius Tigellinus, who later, under Nero, attained to such terrible notoriety. He was deported to the barren rock of Squillace, on the southern coast of Lower Italy, where he supported his life as a fisherman's assistant.

Caius granted the request of the Aemilian family, that the ashes of

Lepidus might be given to the mausoleum of the race, but with savage irony he forced Agrippina, who had schemed a marriage with this ambitious man, herself to bear the urn that contained his ashes in her arms to Rome, without suffering her throughout the whole journey, night or day, to desist from embracing it. Domitius was now dead, leaving an only son, Nero, aged three years. The wrath of Caius extended from Agrippina to her child. He deprived him of all his father's inheritance, and confiscated it to his own necessities. Thus the fatherless and motherless son of Agrippina, the great-grandchild of Augustus, was left destitute in infancy, to be nursed and cared for by his aunt Lepida, sister of his father, and mother of the afterwards infamous Messalina, the mortal enemy of Agrippina.

The success of the auction of the goods of his sisters delighted Caius, and as he was in need of money, he resolved to raise more by the same means. He accordingly sent to Rome for the furniture of the old palace that had been built by Tiberius, and which he had abandoned for his own more sumptuous structure,—'pressing, for the conveyance of these articles,' says Suetonius, 'all the carriages let out on hire in the city, and all the horses and mules that belonged to the bakers, so as to interfere seriously with the conveyance of the bread supply in Rome. Moreover, many engaged in law-suits lost their causes, because they could not hire conveyances to carry them to the courts in time to observe their recognisances. In the sale of the furniture every trick was employed. Sometimes Caius would rail at the bidders for being niggards, and ask them if they were not ashamed to be better off than himself. At another he would affect to regret that the property of princes should pass into private hands. He had found that a rich provincial had given two hundred thousand sesterces to his chamberlain for an underhand invitation to his table, and he was delighted to find that the honour of dining with him was so highly valued. Next day, as the same person was sitting at the sale, he sent him some bauble, for which he told him he must pay two hundred thousand sesterces, and that he should sup with Caesar that evening at Caesar's own invitation.'

A story told of another of his auctions may be given here, though it occurred at Rome. After one of his great public shows, the scaffoldings and decorations were put to the hammer, and the Caesar attended the sales with great glee. Seeing that an aged and wealthy senator had gone to sleep during the auction, he bade the auctioneer take each of the old fellow's nods as a bid, and when the sleeper awoke, he found that he was down for a vast amount of rubbish for which he had to pay a fabulous sum.

The expedition of Caius to Germany was not one of vain bombast. It had a motive, and the journey was probably suggested to him by one of his disinterested advisers, sugared possibly with the suggestion that it might lead to a triumph. He mistrusted the fidelity of the legions

on the Rhine and in Gaul, and thought to win, or terrorise them; to win them he lavished on them the sums raised by his auctions, and squeezed in other ways from the rich Gauls; and to terrorise them he threatened a massacre of such soldiers as had mutinied upon the death of Augustus, and had proclaimed Germanicus. But that had taken place twenty-six years before, and probably few of those engaged in the mutiny were then under the colours. Nevertheless he would, he said, make an example of the legions. This was a mere excuse; he was afraid to admit his real reason—alarm at the spread of disaffection against himself.

A.U.C. 793. A.D. 40. Aet. 28.

But the threats of Caius got wind among the soldiers, and when he began to draw a cordon of mounted troops around them, and bade them deliver up their arms, their attitude became so menacing that Caius was struck with a panic, and hastily returned to Italy, not daring to execute his menace, and resolving to expend his anger on the helpless senators of Rome, who were incapable of resistance.

When an embassy from the senate came to salute him on his way, and urge him to return to a capital languishing in despair at his absence: 'Yes, yes!' said he, 'I shall soon arrive in Rome,' then, striking his hand on the pommel of his sword, he said, 'and this shall come with me.' He sent orders to have a proclamation stuck up on the walls in Rome announcing that he would return to his faithful knights and people, but not to the senate that loved him not. Nor would he suffer a senator to approach him as he neared Rome. He entered the city on his birthday, the 31st August. He was angry with the senate because honours had not been decreed to him for his achievements in Germany, and in his campaign against Britain, which had consisted merely of a march to the sea-coast at Gessoriacum (Boulogne) and the reception of a few hostages sent over from Britain. And yet he had given express orders that no honours were to be decreed to him. In his capricious humour it was equally dangerous to obey and to disobey him in such matters. To the people he showed some favours, for he ascended to the roof of the Julian Basilica in the forum, and thence threw gold and silver among the crowd. In the rush and scramble many were injured, and some killed. It was asserted that with the money he scattered were sharp knives, and that these wounded many on whom they fell, or who grasped inadvertently at them. Although such a mischievous freak was not incompatible with the character of Caius, this is probably an exaggeration.

It has been unnecessary to enter into particulars relative to the expedition of Caligula into Germany, and his campaign against Britain, for the accounts we have of them bear on the surface the appearance of caricature; and we are not engaged on a general history, but on a biographical sketch, with the object of bringing out the individual features of each prince's character and disposition.

No sooner was Caius back in Rome than he made good his menace

against the senate. He did not attempt to sweep them off wholesale, as he had threatened to do with the soldiers, but to pick them off in detail. The execution of a certain Cassius Bettilinus was ordered, and he commanded his father, Capito, to witness his son's death. 'You may bid me be present,' answered Capito, 'but cannot prevent me shutting my eyes.' Caius thereupon ordered him to be put to death along with his son. He had commanded the execution of the son of a Roman knight named Pastor, and forced the wretched father to come and sup with him the same evening. Pastor dared not refuse, as he had another son, and feared for his life. Caius set a slave to watch the father through supper, and see that he did not wince, sigh, or show any token of sadness. 'Caius was wont,' says Seneca, 'to have the mouths of those he condemned choked with a sponge, lest they should heap imprecations upon him.'

The crazy young tiger delighted in humiliating the senators. Seneca gives an instance. He had pardoned Pompeius Pennus, a very aged man, who had held several offices in the state; but he obliged the old man, not only to kneel to him, but he thrust forth his foot in gilded sandals, embroidered with pearls, and bade him kiss it.

But perhaps the greatest humiliation to which the senate was subjected was when he made them take on themselves the function of executioner. One of his agents, a freedman, was named Protogenes, and stood high in his favour. This man entered the senate-house one day, whereupon the senators rose and crowded about him, fawning and soliciting his favour. Protogenes glanced angrily at one named Scribonius Proculus, and said to him, 'What! do you, who are an enemy to Caesar, dare to approach me with a salutation?' That sufficed. The rest of the senators, with shrieks of execration, rushed on the unhappy man and stabbed him with their iron styles, then cast him out to the rabble, who tore him in pieces, and dragged about his limbs piecemeal under the eyes of the emperor, then piled them in a heap before him.

V.—THE MURDER OF CAIUS.

We have had enough and to spare of these horrors. The day of reckoning was rapidly approaching. Some sense of alarm seems to have hovered about the clouded mind of Caius. His prosperity had been so great, and his power had been unresisted. The gods whom he had mocked were jealous, and did not suffer mortals to have their measure of happiness too full. It was with this thought in his mind, making him uneasy, that he complained that no great disaster had occurred in his reign, like the slaughter of the legions of Varus in that of Augustus, or the fall of the amphitheatre of Fidenae in that of Tiberius. He sighed

that no conflagration, pestilence, earthquake, had taken place to right the balance, and he shook in dire fear lest Nemesis should mark him down in place of his people.

For four years the Roman empire had groaned under his wanton tyranny. Conspiracies had been formed against him, but had been discovered or betrayed before they were carried into execution. Finally, a term was put to his reign by a favourite minister of his cruelties, in revenge for a private wrong, though not without the privity of others about his person. The death of the tyrant was due to a palace conspiracy, and to that alone. Though senators and nobles were privy to it, they contributed nothing to its success, and were unprepared with a plan for taking advantage of it when it had been carried out.

Caius himself, by his own folly, destroyed the props on which his safety rested. Rome had borne patiently, though muttering disapproval when its prince had outraged common morality by his association with Drusilla; and when he had elevated her among the gods after her death, and had proclaimed himself a deity equal to Jupiter, the religious sense of the better sort was shocked, but his power was not seriously endangered. He put senators and knights to death in great numbers, under the most transparent pretexts; he laid his hands on private property with the most unscrupulous audacity; he plundered the treasures of Gaul with unblushing frankness. The mob was indifferent, or approved. It had no love for the nobility and plutocracy. Each wealthy man trembled for his life and his money-bags, and was silent, too timorous to venture aught, too suspicious to trust any one, and form a league for mutual protection against the common foe.

The senate and the knights Caius knew well that he could never win, though he might force them into obedience, but he showed for some time a desire to stand well with his people. When, however, he was reduced to straits for money, he imposed taxes that affected the rabble and the general public. He taxed all food brought in at the gates, taxed all trades, and even the amusements of the people. Then their resentment found expression. At the festival of the Circensian games in September, the crowd was loud in its reproaches; Caius sent soldiers among them and hewed down the brawlers.

Still more serious was the estrangement of the soldiery. These had been favoured by him with liberal gifts as long as he had money. Then ensued his threat of massacre or decimation of the legions on the Rhine, and his flight when they showed symptoms of resistance. The comedy of his expedition against Britain had made him ridiculous in their eyes, and they blushed to serve under such an emperor. But his greatest folly was to fall out with the tribunes and captains of his bodyguard—with those to whom was intrusted the safety of his person.

'No man was more exasperated against him by wanton provocation than Cassius Chaerea, tribune of the guard. This man in his youth, in

FIG. 88.—CAIUS. Bust from the Polignac Collection, at Berlin.

A.D. 14, had been in the mutiny on the Rhine, and had shown therein his fidelity and his resolution. Since then he had grown grey in his service of the imperial family. Caius he had known and loved as 'Little Boots,' in the German camp, and had perhaps carried him as a child in his arms. Chaerea had been invested with the charge of collecting some of the taxes, and as he shrank from harsh measures in cases that appealed to mercy, he had been sharply reprimanded by Caius. Moreover, Chaerea had a shrill voice and a feminine intonation that provoked the mirth of the young tyrant, who delighted in mimicking it, and holding up the old tribune to the ridicule of his fellow-soldiers. It was this gross piece of insolence that stirred in Chaerea's heart the thoughts of revenge. He sounded the minds of others, and found that other men, even among the guard, were not averse to putting an end to the reign of tyranny. The chief officer was named Clemens. To him he spoke of the grievance that they, men of honour, should be employed as emissaries of the emperor in the perpetration of monstrous crimes. 'It is we,' he said, 'the officers of his body-guard, who are guilty of this state of affairs, when by a blow we could make an end of it.' Clemens answered that he was too old to enter on such an enterprise, and warned the tribune to be more cautious in his talk. Then he stood up and retired, leaving Chaerea in alarm lest he should betray the communication.

By some means, unexplained, a senator named Pompedius had learned the secret, and he, like a fool, whispered it to a beautiful actress, Quintilia, to whom he was attached, and it was speedily known to Chaerea that the girl was acquainted with the plot. Soon after he heard of the arrest of Pompedius, on another charge, and also that Quintilia was in the hands of the soldiers, and was being sent to him to be stretched on the rack, to force from her disclosures that might compromise Pompedius. His alarm was great, but the brave woman trod on his foot, and with a look assured him he might do his worst, and not a word would escape her lips. By orders of Caius Chaerea was forced so cruelly to rack Quintilia that her dislocation of joints aroused the compassion of Caius even, who discharged her with money, and Pompedius as well, against whom no evidence had been elicited.

Another tribune of the guards taken into the plot was Cornelius Sabinus. But there were others engaged in the conspiracy who belonged to the noble and moneyed classes, men who were infatuated with the idle dream of restoring the republic. Since the day of Philippi the image of the republic had lost much of its incongruity in the recollection of the Romans, and the more they felt their degeneracy and blushed at their subserviency, the more they were disposed to attribute it to the pressure of the hand laid on them, instead of admitting that the evil lay in the moral deterioration of the Roman character. In the rhetorical schools attended by the noble Roman youths, the

favourite themes for declamation were the vindication of the assassins of Caesar, the monologue of Cato of Utica, and the counsel given to Sulla to lay down the dictatorship. Literature had for a while preserved its independence, and history had maintained a republican tone till under Tiberius it had been repressed, and such historians as lived became laudatory of the regent. The books that had been placed under censure were, however, circulated in secret, and the men who had succumbed in the civil wars were invested with a halo they ill deserved. Brutus, Cato, Pompeius, were exalted into patterns of disinterested patriotism, and the highest glory to which a generous youth could aspire was to be like one of these. Thus the young men of Rome were filled with a fanatic enthusiasm for liberty, and if, with maturer years, they discovered that the stuff out of which republicans could be made did not exist in the commonwealth, yet there lingered on in the hearts of the men of ripe age a yearning after the grandeur and the independence of the former epoch in the history of their nation.

The *plebs urbana*, the city rabble that desired nothing save bread and games, furnished no material out of which to create good citizens; the senate, ever ready to act as the tools of the princes whom they hated yet adored, were devoid of the smallest element of statesmanlike faculty; the knights, the capitalists and usurers, were intent on their commercial pursuits, and were indifferent to the form of government so long as there were no commotions in the state to bring about financial crashes. The soldiers had no desire for a republic; the provinces abhorred the idea of a recurrence to the iniquitous and ruinous rule of the optimates. The praetorians who commanded the city were in agreement with the emperor. On whom could the republicans rely for the reconstruction of a free commonwealth? on the slaves and gladiators? That was the only force available, and to summon it to their aid was to subject Rome to the worst of dangers.

If it were impossible to set up the discredited and dead Oligarchic rule, there remained only the alternative of a change of ruler, and some of those who aimed at personal advancement through the death of the regent and the transfer of the sovereignty to another closely allied to themselves, disguised their ambition under a cloak of enthusiasm for republican ideals, and drew along with them accordingly all those fanatics who sought a revolution for the sake of setting up their ideal. Among these men was M. Annius Vinicianus, member of the College of the Arval brothers, and nephew of M. Vinicius, the husband of Julia Livilla, sister of Caligula.[1] He had been a personal friend of M. Aemilius Lepidus, and ever since the execution of Lepidus he had been in fear for himself. His uncle, M. Vinicius, had in his earlier years shown promptness and energy in chastising the Germans, but he was now a quiet unassuming man who did not interfere with politics, and

[1] Josephus calls him M. Minucianus; but this is a mistake.

who had not been banished along with his wife by Caius, as not even suspected of the treasonable projects in which she was involved.

Another who entered into the plot was Callistus, a freedman of Caius, who had amassed great wealth, and was afraid lest his master should think of despatching him in order to draw all this wealth to himself.

In the meantime, on January 1st (A.D. 41), Caligula entered on his fourth consulate, but resigned it on the 7th, and Q. Pomponius Secundus took his place. As colleague with Caius had been appointed Cn. Sentius Saturninus. The conspirators were without fixed purpose and void of courage, so that all the many occasions that had presented themselves for the execution of their plan were allowed to pass without advantage being taken of them. A.U.C. 794. A.D. 41. Aet. 29.

Chaerea alone possessed nerve and resolution. The rest raised difficulties to the schemes proposed, and suggested others equally impossible. The only thing on which all were agreed was that the watchword by which they should know each other was to be 'Liberty.'

At length it was decided that the assassination of the tyrant should take place during the Palatine games, a festival appointed by Livia in honour of the founder of the monarchy. It began on the 17th January and lasted eight days, and in it the emperor and all the noblest Romans, together with their wives and children, took part. But whether Chaerea was to take occasion of Caius standing on a parapet of his palace raining gold down on the swarming multitudes in the forum, and by a thrust to precipitate him from the height, or whether the emperor was to be cut down when on the Capitol, offering a sacrifice for the welfare of his little daughter, or whether he was to be fallen upon when celebrating mysteries in the privacy of his palace, and by whom he was to be killed, this seems to have been left wholly undecided. The intention of Caius was known. Immediately on the conclusion of the games he was going to visit Alexandria, a city with which he was well pleased, because in it his divinity had been first proclaimed and accepted, and then he had resolved to retire to his native Antium, where, rumour said, he was about, as a second Romulus, to refound the city and make that the seat of empire.

Great preparations had been made for the games. A huge wooden theatre had been erected, probably at the point where is the easy descent from the Palatine between the house of the Vestals and the spot where now stands the arch of Titus. The festival was inaugurated by a sacrifice of a scarlet flamingo before the image of the great Augustus. As Caius performed this sacrifice, the blood of the bird spurted over him and over P. Nonius Asprenas, who had been consul in A.D. 38, and this provoked a burst of laughter from Caius. It was afterwards noticed that Asprenas was the first to fall after the murder of the emperor.

As Caius, attended by Chaerea and others, entered the senate-house

a voice was heard to cry: 'Finish what thou hast undertaken; seize the chance that comes to thy hand!' The tribune turned pale, thinking that his secret was betrayed, but soon rallied, and accepted the call as a divine intimation to proceed to the accomplishment of his purpose.

However, day after day passed and nothing was done. Each conspirator looked to the other, none sought to take the initiative, some shrank away altogether, with a fresh accession of fear lest one of their number might betray the plot. Chaerea saw that no hand could be trusted but his own. Already a Greek soothsayer had been brought before Caius, denounced to him as having foretold his death. The emperor, impatient to enjoy the games, postponed hearing him till their conclusion. A message reached him from the oracle at Antium, his native place, to beware of Cassius. 'Of what Cassius?' asked Caius, and his mind travelled to Cassius Longinus, proconsul of Asia, and he gave orders for his recall and impeachment.

The last day of the games arrived, and Caius was in unwonted good spirits at the prospect of his journey to Egypt. He noticed and laughed at the eagerness of the crowd to fill the theatre, which made them disregard the divisions separating the benches reserved for the knights from their own.

On that last day a succession of plays was to be performed, among which was the capture and crucifixion of a robber chief,[1] and after that the murder of the man who took the robber, and of his daughter. Much water dyed crimson was to be splashed about over the persons of the actors. But even this was not held to be sufficient. The chief actor, Mnester, had contrived means to simulate the breaking of a blood-vessel, and he was to pour blood from his mouth so that the stage should swim with the ruddy flood. Such were the revolting exhibitions that delighted a brutal populace, but not the lower classes only, nobles and knights and high ladies as well—in a word, the imperial court and the choicest society in Rome. The imperial box was on the right side of the stage. Behind the emperor sat Vatinius, captain of the praetorian guard, below him the consul, Pomponius, and near him was a man of consular rank, named Cluvius.

'How now, friend?' said the former, 'any news to-day?'

'None that I have heard,' answered Cluvius.

'Know then that the play to be enacted this day is the slaughter of a tyrant.'

'Hush, good friend,' whispered Cluvius; 'beware, lest others of the Achaeans hear thy tale.'

'And the day—what day is this?' asked a senator of another.

[1] This play, the 'Laureolus,' long held its own on the Roman stage. Juvenal refers to it, viii. 187. Martial tells us that this drama was performed to the life in the amphitheatre, a real malefactor being crucified, and real blood, not crimson water, poured forth.

'It is that on which Philip of Macedon was slain by Pausanias, his friend—at the play,' answered the second.

It is clear that the intended attempt was an open secret.

'I had a dream last night,' said Caius to those who sat about him, and the consul Pomponius, at his feet, held up an attentive ear. 'Methought I stood before my brother Jupiter, in heaven, and he thrust at me with his big toe, and I fell—I fell to earth.'

Before the play began, fruit was thrown among the spectators, and also a number of rare and bright-plumaged birds were let loose, that they might be caught at by the people, and a scene of scramble and fisticuffs might provoke merriment.

In the orchestra stood an altar on which a fire burnt, and round it were grouped the dancers; but Caius was disappointed, some boys from Asia were expected who performed rare antics, and they had not as yet arrived.

As the performance took place in the depth of winter, it is impossible to suppose but that the theatre was closed in, and placed above a hypocaust to afford an agreeable temperature. The performance lasted for several hours, and neither the emperor nor the people could have endured the cold without some such provision. When darkness set in, the whole spectacle was to conclude with Tartarus opened—and scenes with fire in the nether world, and with real negroes engaged to act as attendant demons on Minos. A whisper ran through the theatre that Caesar himself was on this occasion to descend from his lodge and take part in the dramatic exhibition. It was possible that this was his intention. He had already astonished some consulars whom he sent for by night by flashing before them in spangles, and dancing and singing in theatrical guise.

At the feet of the emperor sat Pomponius Secundus, consul that year, and every now and then he stooped and kissed the gilded slippers of the prince, whilst sighing for liberty and the republic. Food was brought in, and Caius ate and passed refreshments to his companions. On the preceding days he had left the theatre and gone to the palace for his midday meal, but on this, the concluding day of the festival, he would lunch in his box. Chaerea, not thinking he would do this, had risen and left the theatre to make preparations to kill him as he was on his way to table. Vinicianus was uneasy. He also was seated near the prince. Finding that Caius had no intention of leaving, he rose to go after the tribune, find him and inform him of the fact. Caius looked round, and seeing him stand up laid hold of his gown, and said: 'My good fellow, whither are you going?' Vinicianus, abashed, reseated himself. But his anxiety left him no rest, and seizing a moment when the emperor's attention was otherwise engaged, he slipped away. He encountered Chaerea at the door. The tribune had been waiting, and had made all arrangements. Faithful men, in whom he placed confidence, were

stationed as guards on the way. But as Caius did not return to the palace, he proposed to enter the imperial box and cut him down from behind. From this purpose the alarmed Vinicianus dissuaded him, by representing the tremendous commotion that would ensue, and the chance of a general fight and massacre. As they were thus talking, and turning to go back to the theatre, a messenger came out to say that Caesar was coming.

In fact the senator Asprenas, who was in the plot, had become uneasy likewise at the alteration in the plan of Caius. He sat near the emperor, and he had seen Vinicianus go out. He at once leaned over to the ear of Caius and suggested to him that he must be tired, that the great spectacle closing the performance could not take place till darkness had settled in, and that a bath and a meal would enable the prince to enjoy the scene with greater zest. Caius yielded to the suggestion and stood up. A procession was made, the way was led by dull old Claudius, the uncle of the emperor, and Marcus Vinicius, husband of his banished sister, Julia Livilla, and Valerius Asiaticus, a man in whose bosom rankled anger at a gross insult offered him by Caius, but he was not initiated into the plans of the conspirators. With the emperor up the hill walked Paullus Arruntius; Chaerea, Sabinus, and other officers of the guard attended him. Presently Caius halted and turned sharply to the right into the crypto-porticus, a long gallery that led to the bath-house, leaving his uncle and brother-in-law to ascend by the ordinary road. This passage is still in existence; after running some hundred yards in one direction it turns at right angles, where it falls in with a passage that led down by a flight of steps to the forum. The passage was lighted by œils-de-bœuf from the left, and the walls and vault were richly painted. Here Caius encountered the party of boys from Greece and Asia Minor, who had been sent for to perform in the final scene. Caius stopped to speak to them, and was inclined to turn back with them at once and go to the theatre: his appetite was disordered by his supper the preceding night, and he did not care to eat. But the manager of the boys said that they were suffering from cold, and asked that they should be allowed first to warm themselves. Caius consented, and took a few steps forward. Then Chaerea approached him and asked for the watchword. The stageplayer boys were there. Caius attempted to raise a laugh among them at the cost of Chaerea, and he gave him an ugly word, imitating his treble pipe, and accompanying it with an insulting gesture. In a moment the old tribune's sword was raised, and he struck the emperor between the neck and the shoulder. The blow was arrested by his collar-bone. Caius staggered back, too amazed to cry out, but he attempted to run up the passage. He was caught by the hand of Cornelius Sabinus, who gave him a thrust, and he fell on his knees. A second blow cleft his jaw. He sank on the marble floor, drawing his limbs together to save his body, screaming, 'I am alive!

I am alive!' whilst the conspirators thronged about him, crying, 'Again! Again!' hacked him, and left him gashed with thirty wounds.

Then all dispersed, seeking their own safety.

The cries of the boys, and of some servants, roused the alarm of a German guard that Caius entertained, and on which he lavished much money. These tall fair-haired barbarians cared nought for the politics of Rome, but thought much of their duty to their master. They came pouring into the passage, now dark with the gathering shadows of the short winter day, and found there Asprenas, the senator. He was at once cut down; as they swept on, they lit on Norbanus, a noble, and suspecting that he was in the plot, slaughtered him. Then they caught a senator, Anteius, standing by the body of their master, he had run up to gloat his eyes on the corpse of the tyrant who had put his father to death. He also was slain. Then, tramping on, the guard descended to the theatre and surrounded it. Thither, in the meantime, a report had come that Caius had been killed. Few credited it; to some the tidings were too good to be true. Others feared that it was set afloat in order to trick the people, and that the monster would suddenly appear among them and chastise them for unseemly exultation.

Some exclaimed that they would go; others that it was safest to stay. Presently certain who had been silently attempting to escape came back with blank faces, to say that the wild Germans had formed a ring round the theatre, and refused to allow any one to pass. Then the commotion, the panic became overwhelming; women shrieked, and children cried. Some of the soldiers present on their benches drew their swords; the slaves began to cluster in knots and arm themselves with whatever was available. But the senators, the nobles, the knights, sat paralysed with terror. No doubt the negroes and the half-dressed demons who were to appear in the final performance, ran out on the blood and paint-bespattered stage. A surgeon, named Alcyon, with Greek cunning succeeded in passing himself and some friends through the encircling ring, on the plea that he had been summoned to attend the wounded prince, and he took his assistants with him.

The most incredible rumours swept through the ranges of seats. It was declared that Caius had been wounded; but was in the physician's hands. Then it was said that the emperor, drenched in blood, had escaped from his murderers, and was in the market-place haranguing the people.

The Germans now began to fill the theatre, and the uproar became excessive, all crying and protesting their innocence, beating their faces, tearing their hair, and crowding on the Germans with entreaties to be merciful. Then in came three soldiers, bearing on their pikes the heads of the three men they had put summarily to death, and threw them on the altar in the pit. This produced a moment's lull. The public crier, a man of strong voice, seized the occasion. Hastily snatching from the

wardrobe of the theatre the most mournful habit he could find, he wrapped it about his person, and standing forward on the stage, in thundering tones roared out the announcement that Caius was in very truth dead; then, addressing the German guards, he bade them beware how they committed any violence, for the senate was now in power, and would certainly take account of any such conduct. Some of the tribunes joined him, and by this means allayed the anger of the rude soldiers. Promises of largess entirely assuaged it; for, as Josephus shrewdly informs us, they argued in their own minds that, Caius being actually dead, there was nothing to be got by further display of fidelity to him, whereas something satisfactory might drop to them were they to sheath their swords. The people were now suffered to leave the theatre. The senators at once assembled for consultation as to the steps to be taken in the crisis, and the people surged about the forum, and rushed on this or that man, pretending that they were hunting for the murderers of the emperor. Then Valerius Asiaticus mounted the rostrum and addressed the people. It was certainly true, said he, that the Caesar was dead; he had been killed. Who were the murderers? was the question they were asking. He did not know; but there was one thing he did know: 'I wish I had been the man.'

He was followed by the consuls, who ordered the mob to disperse, and the soldiers to return to their barracks. To the people they gave hopes of remission of taxation, and promised to the soldiers a gift of money if they refrained from disturbing the public peace. The senate, they said, were in consultation for the restoration of pristine Liberty. With these words the people were somewhat appeased, but the military retired altogether dissatisfied, for they had no desire to see the Republic reinstated in its ancient form.

In the senate, Cneius Sentius Saturninus, consul that year, after having returned from the rostrum, addressed the conscript fathers in a vehement oration, in which he congratulated them on the fact that the recovery of liberty was now in their power, and he urged them to seize the occasion without delay. He moved that public honours should be decreed to the men who had ridded Rome of an intolerable burden. Then up started one Trebellius Maximus, and snatched a signet ring from the hand with which Saturninus had been gesticulating. 'See!' he exclaimed, 'the head of Caius is engraved thereon.' At once there rose a shout, and the ring was pounded to atoms under the feet of the senators.

Chaerea came forward and asked the consul what was to be the watchword. 'Liberty!' was the reply. The tribune at once retired to give the word to the soldiers. He found that he could count on four regiments only, the rest were sullen and dissatisfied, and refused to accept orders from the senate.

Chaerea now returned to the palace. He was not easy. Caesonia,

the wife, and Julia, the daughter of the tyrant, were alive; the latter still an infant. One would hardly have supposed that danger could have been apprehended from them; but the dissatisfaction of the military made Chaerea suspicious, and he thought it possible that they might rally about this woman and her child. He therefore resolved on their destruction. He held a consultation with some of the conspirators, and it is satisfactory to learn that few of them approved of using severity towards these unfortunates. Some were found to agree with Chaerea, and urged that Caesonia had instigated Caius to his worst crimes. This again was denied. Chaerea, to cut the dispute short, despatched Julius Lupus, a tribune, to kill the mother and her child. Lupus found the unhappy Caesonia lying on the pavement by the dead husband, clasping his body, drenched in his blood, and reproaching him in her madness of despair for not having attended to her advice. The babe lay also there, in its father's blood. The lamentation of Caesonia was variously interpreted. Some believed that she meant that she had vainly endeavoured to dissuade Caius from his severities, others that she had obtained information of the conspiracy, and had exhorted him to arrest and put to death all those who were in it. When she saw the soldier coming down the subterranean passage, torch in one hand and sword in the other, she raised herself somewhat, and seeing at once that her life was required, she staggered to her knees, presented her neck to him, and bade him not boggle over his task. He dealt her the fatal blow, and then despatched the sobbing child by dashing out its brains against the wall.

Such was the end of Caius, the 'Little Boots,' the pet of the soldiers on the Rhine. He died on January 24th, at the age of twenty-eight years, four months, and twenty-four days, after having reigned three years, ten months, and eight days.

His body was rescued from insult by Herod Agrippa, who secretly, in the general panic and confusion, removed it to a bed, covered it with clothes, and then ran out to announce that the emperor was still breathing, and bade his attendants haste for physicians.[1]

Afterwards he removed it to a garden belonging to the Lamian gens, a banker family on the Esquiline, and there it was partially burnt and buried. 'It was afterwards disinterred by his sisters, on their return from banishment, consumed completely, and buried. Till this was done, the gardeners were greatly disturbed by apparitions. Not a night passed without some terrible alarm, moreover, in the house where he was slain, and this continued till a fire broke out and consumed it.'[2]

[1] It was probably through the attendants on Herod that the very minute and graphic account of the conspiracy and murder reached Josephus. His narrative is far fuller than those of Dio and Suetonius.

[2] Suet. *Calig.* 59.

VI.—PORTRAITS.

Busts and Statues.

1. The dark-green basalt bust in the Capitoline Museum is incomparably the finest. The genuineness of this bust has been disputed on insufficient grounds. Mouth and brows not parallel. Head turned to the right, with a scowl on the face, due to epileptic distortion. The brows form a horizontal line. The toughness and hardness of the stone account for the admirable preservation. This bust is really that which is typical, and by which others have been identified. The medals, though not disagreeing with it, are not sufficiently good to enable us to fix by them the features of Caligula. This bust has in it distinct reminiscences of Augustus and of Agrippa, the two great-grandfathers. A renaissance sculptor would not have made the mouth and brows run as they do. (Fig. 83.)

2. A marble bust in the Capitoline Museum, Upper Gallery, No. 69. Head turned to the right, and unquestionably the same person as that represented in green basalt. Half the nose and two little patches new. These two portraits form what Bernoulli calls the Capitoline type.

3. Bust in the Lateran (No. 211), found at Cervetri in 1846. A deviation from the Capitoline type, and apparently taken before the illness of Caligula, after which he assumed his menacing expression. It is a pathetic bust. There is but a slight frown, but this is caused by the eyes being turned upwards, and the brows drawn together to screen the eyeballs from the glare of light. Bernoulli says, 'Apparently a different person from the Capitoline.' I do not agree with him. To my eye it is the same man, but with a different expression. The nose and brow have the line observable in Agrippa, and the lower lip is abruptly curled as in the Capitoline busts.

4. Bust in the Villa Albani (No. 633), with veil over the back of the head; this follows the Capitoline type, and has strong reminiscences of Augustus.

5. Head at Florence (Fig. 82), head turned sharply to the right. Follows the Capitoline type. The draped bust is modern, the head probably ancient, though suspicions have been cast on it, and chiefly because it resembles the Capitoline head; but it resembles it with a difference, and is no servile copy.

6. Bronze bust at Turin, head turned sharply to the right. This follows the Capitoline type, and is of unquestionable genuineness, though it is not known where it was found. (Fig. 86.)

7. Statue in the Louvre (No. 37). The head does not belong to the body, for which it is much too small. Found at Gabii. Though not of the Capitoline type, it is the portrait of the same person at a more advanced age, or in a condition of further moral deterioration that in a few years has prematurely oldened him. The top of the head is low.

8. Statue found at Minturnae in armour; now in Naples; found in 1787. Certainly of the same character as the Capitoline, but of very inferior workmanship. Head not turned, scowl, closed lips. Much patched and restored. (Fig. 87.)

9. A beautiful statue of Caligula as a boy, in the Torlonia gallery; found at Marino. It is in Greek marble and of admirable workmanship. He holds in his left hand a roll, and at his feet is a *scrinium*. He wears the *toga praetextata*, and the *bulla* round his neck. It is difficult to say without very close scrutiny how much is old and how much modern in this as well as in other statues in the Torlonia gallery, as the late prince had an unfortunate passion for patching and polishing up all his specimens till they looked like works just turned out of a studio.

10. Bust in the Torlonia Gallery (No. 524), differs from the Capitoline type. It is a bust of little merit; nose new.

11. Bust at Berlin in white marble. From the Polignac collection. This bust has been reworked, but is nevertheless interesting as it gives us the face of Caius when besotted with repeated epileptic attacks, and indulgence of every sort; the flabby muscles, the puffed features, are characteristic of softening of the brain. There is hardly any artistic value in this bust as we now have it, and it is regarded as an imitation antique. It differs so much from the general type that this is hardly probable. (Fig. 88.)

12. Bust of the young Caius at Richmond. (Michaelis, Anc. Marbles, p. 625.)

13. Naked statue of Caius as a boy, at Stockholm, with head wreathed with laurels, and chlamys thrown back. Lower portion of the limbs new.[1]

Cameos and Intaglios.

1. Two cameos resembling the heads on the coins, in the Uffizi, at Florence. A yellow agate with his head. None of these very important.

2. Sardonyx with head of Caligula and a female face, either Drusilla or Caesonia, facing him, in the Cabinet des Médaillès at Paris. (Engr. in Mongez, pl. 25, 8.)

3. Sardonyx also there, with Caligula inscribed over it, and the heads of his three sisters beneath. (Engr. by Lenormant, xi. 14.)

4. Onyx at Vienna. (Engr. Bernoulli, pl. xxvi. 13.)

5. Cameo in the collection Wallmoden. (Engr. Bernoulli, pl. xxvi. 12.)

6. Sardonyx, Caius with wreath of laurels, and Drusilla or Caesonia. (Engr. Bernoulli, xxvii. 11.)

[1] The equestrian statue in the British Museum has a modern head. The statue in the Vatican, called Caligula, found at Otricoli, is certainly Augustus. The busts at Berlin are: one Renaissance work, the other old but fresh tooled over. That at Wilton, with an elephant on the breast-plate, is hardly ancient.

CLAUDIUS

I.—AFTER THE MURDER.

No sooner had the tidings of the death of Caius spread through the palace than a panic seized the servants and all belonging to the imperial house. Claudius, the uncle of Caligula, had, as we have seen, gone up the road from the theatre, the emperor had been behind, and had turned out of the road to enter the subway to the palace along with Paullus Arruntius; but Claudius and his companions, M. Vinicius and Valerius Asiaticus were perhaps unaware of this till the noise of alarm, the cries of the victims, and the shouts of the guards informed them that some event of moment had taken place. Claudius had already entered the palace; he at once concealed himself behind a portière to a door, and peering between the curtains saw the Germans rush past bearing the bloody heads of the men they had murdered. When the soldiers left for the theatre he did not venture from his hiding-place. Presently an Epeirot guardsman named Gratus came that way, and noticing a pair of feet below the curtain drew it aside and disclosed Claudius, who in a paroxysm of terror threw himself on the ground and implored that his life might be spared. Gratus recognising him, cried out, 'Here also is a Germanicus,' at once saw his opportunity, and ran for some of his fellows. They threw Claudius into a litter—his servants had dispersed—and conveyed him on their shoulders to the barracks. The populace, who filled all the streets and squares, at first supposed he was being carried to execution and commiserated him, but when they learned the real state of the case, broke forth into shouts of applause and cries of 'Salve Imperator!'

Meanwhile the consuls had seized the helm of the pilotless state, and believing the moment auspicious for the restoration of the Republic had summoned the senate to assemble in the Capitol. These consuls were Cn. Sentius Saturninus,[1] and Q. Pomponius Secundus. Pomponius had been impeached under Tiberius, but had escaped death, and he had cringed to Caligula to the last hour of his life, when he stooped, in public, in the theatre to kiss his gilded slippers.

[1] Sentius was either the governor of Syria who had been appointed by Germanicus in the room of Piso, and had by force of arms compelled Piso to abandon his attempt to retain his government, or he was the son of that man. It cannot be said with any certainty which.

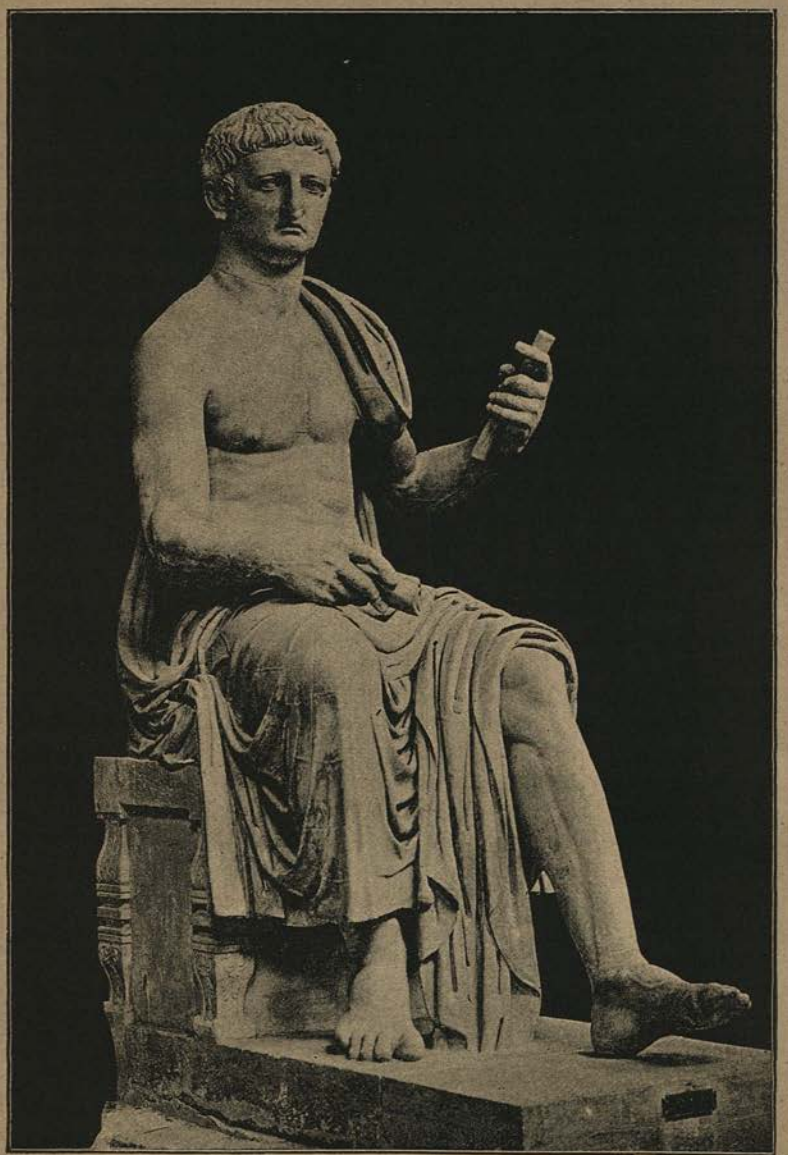


FIG. 89.—CLAUDIUS. Seated Figure, found at Herculaneum; Mus. Nation., Naples.

For the first time for a hundred years the consuls gave on this occasion the pass-word, and they gave it to Chaerea. It was 'Liberty,' and having received it the tribune rushed off to order the murder of Caesonia and the infant child of Caius. That was what he understood by 'liberty.'

But whilst the fathers of the Commonwealth consulted in the Capitol, they heard the cheers of the mob below, as the litter of Claudius was carried through the forum, and they recognised immediately that their scheme for the setting up of the Republic was futile. Their endeavour now was to take the nomination of the emperor in their own hands. For this purpose they sent a deputation, at the head of which were the tribunes of the people, Veranius and Brocchus, into the camp of the praetorian guard to entreat Claudius to place his claims in the hands of the senate, and not to owe his election to the voices of the military. They represented to him that he had experienced great danger under the late reign, that a monarchy was a menace to all, and that if he would submit to the counsel of the senate he would receive from them the highest honours, and would escape the dangers that must ensue should a struggle ensue between the praetorians and those soldiers who were under the authority of the senate, and who were ready to fly to arms at their call. These representations were calculated to arouse all the terrors of Claudius, a man without moral or physical courage. But at this decisive moment the scale was turned by the advice of the Jewish prince, Agrippa, who had been the friend for many years of the newly proclaimed Imperator.

As this man used his influence so decisively at this critical moment, and as he has also been mentioned as exercising a powerful and baneful influence on the preceding emperor, it will be as well here to give a slight sketch of his career.

Aristobulus, the father of Agrippa, a son of Herod the Great, had been put to death by order of his father. The mother of Agrippa, Berenice, was the sister's daughter of Herod the Great, and she had been an intimate friend of Antonia. Moreover, Claudius and Agrippa were born in the same year. Agrippa received his education at the Roman court, and lived on familiar terms with Drusus, the son of Tiberius, and with Claudius. After the death of Berenice he plunged into great extravagance and involved himself in debts. When Drusus died, and he saw that no assistance was to be obtained from Tiberius, the disordered state of his finances obliged him to leave Rome. He returned to the East, and to Idumaea, in such a state of depression of spirits that his wife, Cypros, a granddaughter of Herod the Great, was in alarm lest he should make away with himself; she therefore addressed herself to Herodias, sister of Agrippa and wife of the tetrarch, Herod of Galilee and Peraea, and at her urgency the tetrarch

summoned his kinsman to Tiberias and allotted to him a certain income for his support.

But before long, at a banquet at Tyre, Herod and Agrippa quarrelled, and the latter was forced to leave. He sought the consular, L. Pomponius Flaccus, who was now governor of Syria, and whose acquaintance he had made in Rome. By this man he was well received, and he remained a while with him, but shortly after was convicted of having taken a bribe from the Damascenes, who wished to purchase his influence with the proconsul, and he was again compelled to fly.

He reached Ptolemais, and there resolved (A.D. 36) to go to Rome, as he was unable to live elsewhere, having no available means. His freedman, Marsyas, was required to raise some money, and he borrowed from a Jew, who had formerly been in the service of Berenice, the sum of 17,500 Attic drachmas, on which he was obliged to give his I.O.U for 20,000. With this money he made his way to Anthedon in Phoenicia, intending thence to take ship, but he was immediately arrested by the procurator, Capito, for a sum of money which he owed to the treasury. The procurator laid his hands on the money so hardly and recently acquired, but by some means Agrippa managed to escape. Agrippa reached Alexandria, where he met his wife, and she succeeded in raising 200,000 drachmas from the Alabarch, partly in gold, partly in bills on Puteoli. Agrippa then sailed for Rome, while Cypros with the children returned to Judaea.

When the Jewish prince reached Puteoli, he sent to ask Tiberius permission to wait on him at Capreae. His request was granted, and he was received with favour, and was well treated till the report of the procurator Capito reached the emperor. Tiberius then refused to see him further till he had refunded the sum he owed to the treasury. In his difficulties Agrippa turned to Antonia, his mother's friend, and this kind and generous woman at once furnished him with the requisite sum.

Tiberius again received him, and Agrippa succeeded in gaining his confidence to such an extent that he intrusted him with the guardianship of his grandson, Tiberius Gemellus. However, the calculating eye of the Jewish prince marked out Caius as the future emperor, and, partly out of gratitude to Antonia, but mainly out of self-interest, he attached himself to her grandson. Then he borrowed a large sum of money from the freedman, Thallus of Samaria, repaid Antonia, and spent the rest in gaining the favour of Caius, who was kept very short of money by his frugal uncle. But it was precisely this relation which brought Agrippa into renewed difficulties. One of his freedmen, Eutychus, had stolen some clothes, and was whipped for it; he took to flight, was arrested, and declared to the prefect of the city that he had State secrets he could divulge.

This proved to be a conversation he had overheard between his

master and Caius in a chariot—the story has already been told—when Agrippa said it was high time that the old fellow departed this world and that Caius was in his place—with a hint that Gemellus should be got rid of in true oriental fashion.

This led to the arrest of Agrippa, and he was retained in confinement till the death of Tiberius. The first act of Caius on his accession was to liberate his friend, and to invest him with the royal title and diadem, and give him the tetrarchies of Philip and Lysanias. Caius, however, valued the society and opinions of the Idumaean too highly to allow him to leave Rome at once for his kingdom. It was not till the second year of the reign of Caius that he was suffered to depart. On reaching his realm, Herod Antipas formed a plan to obtain his ruin, but Agrippa appealed against him to Caius, and Herod was banished to Lugdunum, and his tetrarchy added to the dominions of Agrippa.

For some reason not explained Agrippa returned to Rome, and was on the Palatine at the time of the murder of his friend Caius. He it was who rescued the body and laid it on a bed, and pretended that the emperor was still alive. Hearing soon after of what had befallen Claudius, he hastened to the praetorian camp. There he found his companion in youth full of alarm for his life, and dazed with the change in his fortunes and the uncertainty connected with it. The urgency of Agrippa to grasp with firm hand the sceptre fallen to him, and not to allow himself to be befooled by an impotent senate, sufficiently encouraged the frightened and irresolute man to refuse the proposition made by the deputies of the senate. Thereupon these deputies, alarmed for their own safety by the threatening aspect of the military, threw themselves at the feet of Claudius, and implored him, if he must be emperor, to accept the *imperium* from the senate and not from the soldiers. But even this was refused by Claudius, prompted thereto, doubtless, by Agrippa. He pretended that in the camp he was not his own master to go where he pleased.

The messengers of the senate returned to those who had commissioned them with the account of their failure. This produced general consternation. The senators resolved to send for Agrippa, and invite him to use his influence to persuade Claudius to concession.

Shortly after the departure of the tribunes of the people, the king had left the camp, and the delegates encountered him on his way, and conducted him into the senate. He appeared dressed as for a banquet, for, indeed, he was to have supped with Caius after the theatrical performances, and had not had time or thought to change his garb. He pretended to know nothing of what had taken place, and when the senators explained to him their wishes, he, with much composure and trenchant good sense, told them that they were incapable of carrying them into effect. On one side stood the veterans armed, resolute; on the other side—what?

Then, to relieve the minds of those who heard him, he praised his friend Claudius, whom he had known from childhood, as a man 'who would not exercise sovereignty like a tyrant,' and assured the fathers of his readiness, if they still wished it, to act as an intermediary between them and Claudius.

The helpless senators, after a little heroic bluster about their confidence in the troops that were subject to their orders, and about the righteousness of their cause, yielded everything in accepting Agrippa's offer to negotiate. They knew the man. It was he—and he above all—who had been the evil counsellor to Caius. He, as all Rome believed, had been the teacher, the prompter of Caius in his most wanton acts of tyranny[1]—and yet they asked this man to invite Claudius to lay down the sovereignty thrust upon him and become a servant of the senate.

This was a confession of impotence. When the new embassy arrived in the camp on the Quirinal, Agrippa disengaged himself from those associated with him so as to have a private conference with Claudius, and to put into his mouth the answers he was to give to the delegates. Accordingly, after the new emperor had listened to what was said, he assumed the tone recommended by his friend: he promised not to rule like the last Caesar, but to exercise great moderation. He protested that his own wishes were in accordance with those of the senate, but, said he, his primary object must be to avoid a sanguinary conflict. Then, by moonlight, the soldiers passed before him and took the oath of allegiance, and in return received from him a promise of a liberal reward.

Before daybreak the consuls summoned the fathers to fresh consultation in the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, where they had met the preceding evening, but only a hundred put in an appearance. All the rest had fled to their villas to take precautions for their personal security.

When the Vigiles, the city police, heard this, they clamoured for the election of an emperor. The mob in the forum took up the cry. But nothing was done. The senate in assembly were without resolution, and full of mistrust. The day was spent in gesticulations, harangues, the putting of motions that were negatived, and the only thing they could have done to save appearances—the formal election of Claudius—was left undone. But two elderly senators, M. Annius Vinicianus and P. Valerius Asiaticus, offered themselves as candidates for the empty throne. This roused angry opposition, and in this Rump parliament neither could obtain a majority.

In the meantime, the praetorians dispersed through the city showed the gold they had received, and the Vigiles, in whom the senate had proclaimed their confidence,—a body made up of freedmen, and the

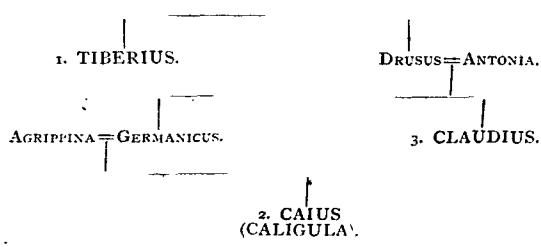
[1] Dio. lix. 24.

soldiers of the Palatine guard, the sailors of the fleet, all went over with their colours to the side of Claudius. It was in vain that Chaerea protested that they were placing on the throne an idiot in place of a madman. The soldiers thought only of the prizes that would be theirs, and went to the camp to swear allegiance.

Evening was drawing in. The senate saw that the game was lost; it was now a scramble who should be first with the new prince. Each senator hurried as fast as his legs could bear him up the Quirinal hill to tender his most abject homage to the 'idiot' whom the soldiers had placed on the throne. The guards, however, were unwilling to suffer them to approach their emperor, knowing very well that they had been in council all day to oppose his proclamation, and mistrusting their intentions. They elbowed and kicked the conscript fathers away; some were severely hurt, and the consul Pomponius was threatened with death. Then Agrippa advised his friend to interfere, and Claudius requested that no disrespect should be shown to such as came to salute him. Claudius now appointed Rubrius Pollio to the command of the guards, and ordered the arrest of those officers who were implicated in the murder of Caius. He was conveyed to the palace in a litter, under guard, and the senate was summoned to assemble in the imperial palace, there formally to accept the nominee of the soldiers. This was accordingly done; the titles that had been accumulated on his predecessors were heaped on Claudius, and he accepted all but that of Father of his Country, which he would not receive till he had merited it, and that of Imperator, which he did not deserve, never having been engaged in any military expedition.

II.—THE YOUTH OF CLAUDIUS.

CLAUDIUS was born at Lugdunum (Lyons) on the 1st August B.C. 10. He was the youngest child of Drusus, brother of Tiberius, and he was brother of Germanicus. His mother was Antonia, the daughter of the triumvir, Mark Antony, by Octavia, sister of Augustus. His name in full was Tiberius Claudius Drusus Nero. He lost his father the year



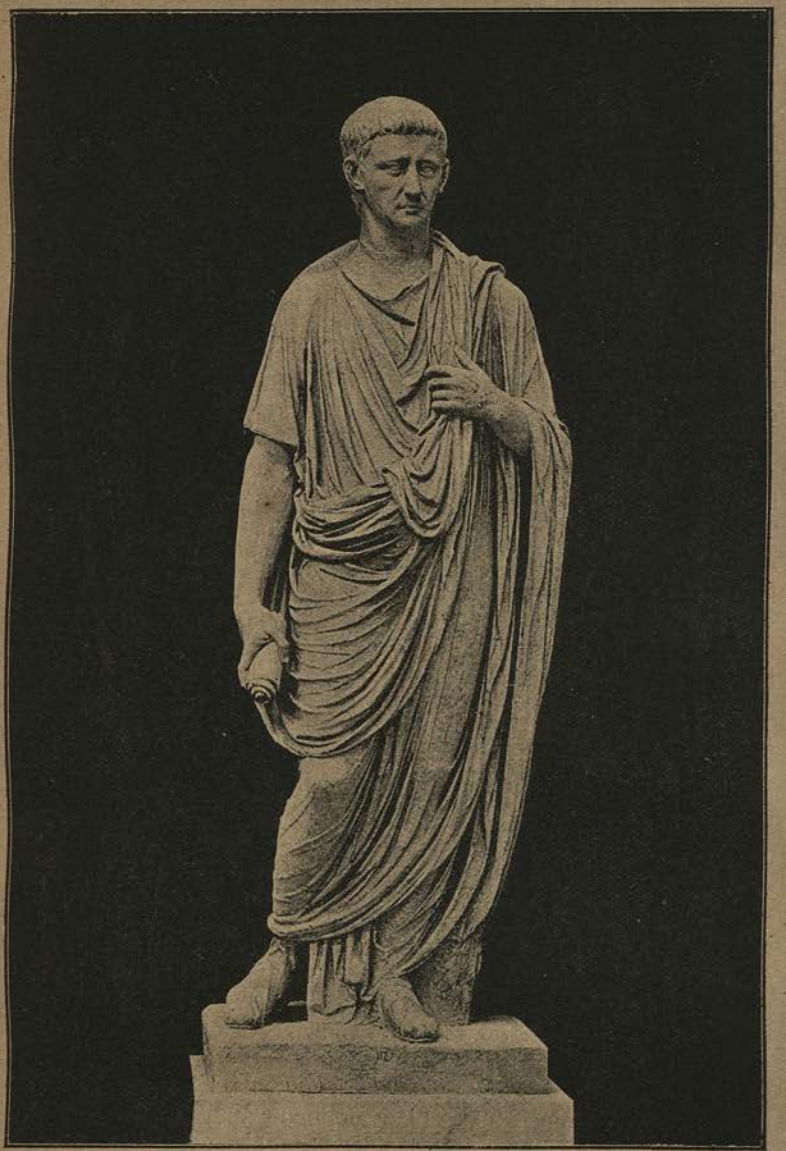


FIG. 90.—CLAUDIUS. Statue in the Vatican, Nuovo Braccio, No. 117.

after he was born, and then Antonia returned with her three children to Rome, and lived in a palace there which afterwards bore her name. Notwithstanding her youth and the urgency of Augustus that she would marry again, Antonia preferred to remain a widow and watch the education of her children. As daughter of his beloved sister Octavia, she stood by birth closely allied to the imperial house, and her marriage with Drusus had bound this tie still closer. Moreover, as she was at the same time daughter-in-law of Livia and sister-in-law of Tiberius, she served as a link between the rival houses, and she sought by no means to attach herself to one party, but to endeavour to conciliate both.

In the imperial household her position cannot have been an easy one, for the antagonism between the Julian and the Claudian members became daily more acute, and it is possible that the distress caused by this strife is what has marked the countenance of Antonia—in itself sweet, though hardly beautiful—with a look of unhappiness that never left it.

Germanicus, her eldest son, was handsome, popular in his manners, and favourably regarded by Augustus. Quite the opposite to Germanicus in every point was the brother, Claudius, thirteen years his junior. This prince's childhood had been one of sickness of body and intellectual feebleness. Till he grew to man's estate he seems to have fallen from one malady into another. This extreme delicacy would in our days attach the parents most closely to the feeble, fragile little life, but such a feeling is entirely a product of Christianity which has wrought in us a love, a reverence for weakness and pain.

It is not so among the beasts; it was not so among the ancients. In classic times a delicate child was regarded as a burden, of which the parents would gladly be rid. What made the lot of the boy the more unhappy, was that he was so closely allied to the reigning family. In a house of which every member strove to impress on his contemporaries that this house was derived from a divine origin, that was overshadowed by divine protection; one in which the marvellous beauty of its members seemed a proof of descent from Venus, and its marvellous success an evidence of a protecting providence, in such a house the bodily feeble and mentally defective boy was out of place. His mother—noble and pure though she was—showed him no love, and called him 'a human monster, begun by nature, and never finished.' When she was speaking of some excessively foolish man, she would say, 'He is more stupid even than my son Claudius.' She could find interest and pleasure in petting a lamprey at her villa in Bauli, and in adorning it with gold ear-rings,[1] but not in the forlorn child to which she had given birth.

Livia, his grandmother, treated Claudius with like disregard. She hardly ever condescended to speak to him, and when she had to com-

[1] The same villa possessed formerly by Hortensius, where he also had petted a lamprey, and cried his eyes out when it died.

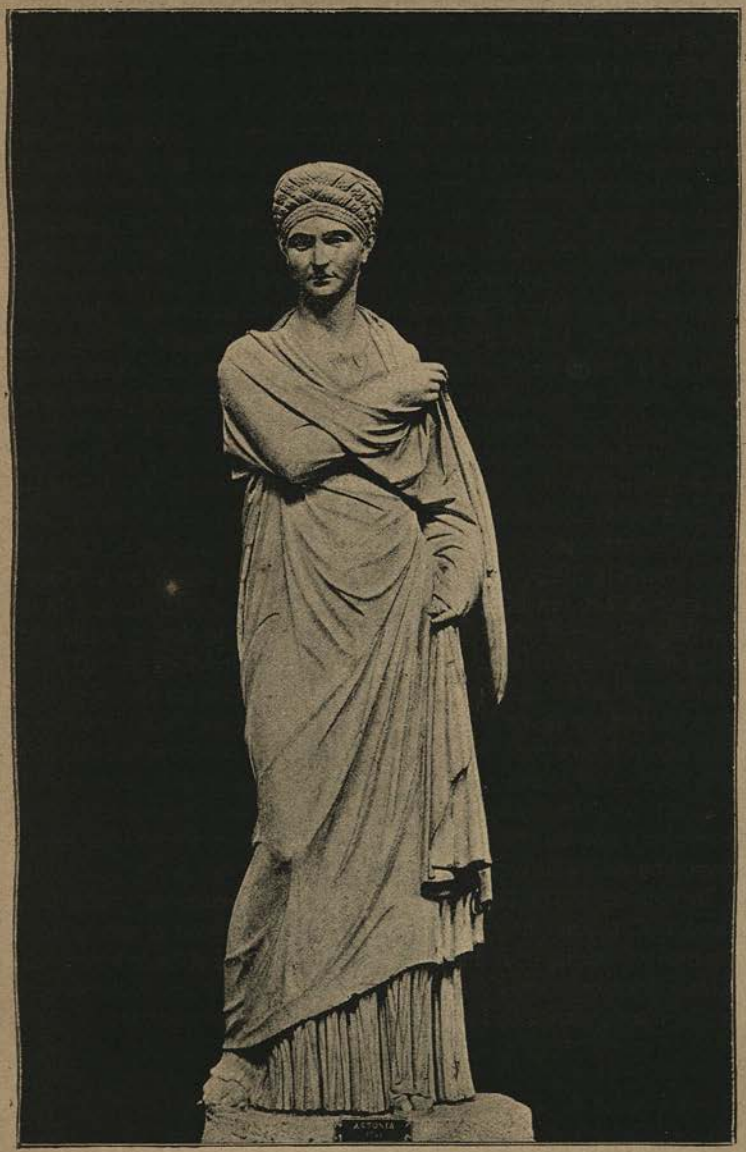


FIG. 91.—ANTONIA. Statue in the Louvre.

municate with him, did so in writing, or through a servant, and then in short and severe terms. His sister Livilla, on once hearing that he might possibly be called hereafter to power, exclaimed loudly at the unworthy fate of the Roman people to fall under so despicable a governor.

Suetonius has preserved some letters of Augustus relative to him, that show us how troubled the emperor was at the deficiencies of his great-nephew. 'I have had some conversation with Tiberius,' he wrote to his wife, 'according to your desire, my dear Livia, as to what must be done with your grandson Tiberius (Claudius) at the games of Mars. We have both come to the same conclusion, that we must finally determine what course is to be taken with him. For if he be really sound, and—so to say—right in his wits, why should we hesitate to promote him by the same steps and stages by which we advanced his brother (Germanicus)? But if we find him below the average and defective in mind as in body, we must avoid the chance of making both him and ourselves objects of ridicule to the world, which is always prone to seize on such subjects for mirth and derision. It will be a never-ending worry if we have to debate over each several occasion for his promotion as it arises, and it is best to settle once for all whether the fellow is fit to take a public office or not. As to the matter you consult me about now—whether I object to his appearing as superintendent of the priests in the games of Mars,—I allow it, if he will suffer himself to be ruled by his kinsman, the son of Silanus, so as to do nothing to make folk stare and laugh. But I do not approve of his witnessing the Circensian games from the Pulvinar. He would there be exposed to public view in the very front of the theatre. Nor do I wish that he should go to the Alban Mount, or be in Rome at the Latin festival; for folks will say, if he be allowed to attend his brother to the Alban Mount, why is he not made praefect of the city? So now, my dear Livia, you have my ideas on this matter. In my opinion, we ought to settle this affair once for all, that we may not be always in suspense. You may, if you like, let your kinswoman Antonia read this part of my letter.'

In another letter Augustus wrote: 'I will invite the young fellow, Tiberius (Claudius), every day to supper during your absence, that he may not sup alone with his friends Sulpicius and Athenodorus. I do wish the poor creature were more particular and careful in the choice of friends, whose manners, airs, and gait were more proper for imitation—

'In things important he most sadly fails.'

When his mind does not ramble, his disposition is good.'

In a third letter Augustus wrote: 'May I perish, my dear Livia, if I am not amazed at being pleased with the declamation of your grandson, Tiberius (Claudius). How he, who slouches about so uncouthly, should be able to make a speech clearly and to the purpose, is a marvel to me.'

The appearance of Claudius was not prepossessing, as we may judge

from a description given of him late in life:—'Either sitting or standing, but especially when he lay asleep, his appearance was majestic and graceful; for he was tall, though not slender. His grey locks became him well, and he had a full neck. But his knees were feeble, and failed him when walking, so that his gait was ungainly, both when he assumed state, and when he was taking diversion. He was outrageous in his laughter, and still more so in his wrath, for then he slobbered at the mouth and nostrils. He also stammered in his speech, and had a tremulous motion of the head at all times, but particularly when he was engaged in any business, however trifling. He dragged his right foot. His eyes were blue, but bloodshot. As he stammered, and ideas or emotions rose faster than he could give them expression, he used violent and often grotesque actions to assist in making his words intelligible. And when he was excited his head rolled about from side to side, his voice became hoarse, and he roared like a wild beast.'

It is easy to imagine such a man in his earlier days, stumbling about, getting in the way of his kinsfolk, saying things he ought not to say; not without a pleasant face indeed, but so ill-built, and so clumsy in manner, and so lacking in quickness of apprehension, that he became the despair of his relatives. He was therefore kept in the background. At the gladiatorial show which Germanicus and he gave in the year B.C. 6 in memory of their father, he was allowed to appear, but only muffled in a cloak so as to conceal his infirmity, and on the occasion of his assuming the garb of manhood, he was conveyed by night in a close litter to the Capitol, and the investment was hurried through without ceremony.

Claudius was placed for a long time in his boyhood, and even after he had assumed the toga, under the tutorship of a wretched pedagogue, whom he himself complained of in a biography he wrote, as 'a barbarous wretch, formerly superintendent of the mule-drivers, who was selected as my tutor, that he might correct me sharply on every trifling occasion.'

This unfortunate, despised and neglected boy had a heart warmly alive to any kindness shown to him. Many years after, when he was emperor, and a certain candidate for the quaestorship was supported by his influence, he gave as his reason for his support: 'His father once handed me a draught of cold water when I was sick.' Once when he brought a woman forward as witness in some trial before the senate, he said, 'She was my mother's freedwoman and her dresser, but she always behaved to me with respect, as her master. I say this because there are some of my own family even now who do not look upon me with regard.'

The coldness he received from his relations threw him for companionship upon inferiors; these were freedmen and slaves. Moreover, the harshness with which he was treated produced shyness and timidity

among his equals and superiors. Had his mother and the young men of the family encouraged him and treated him kindly, he might have got over some of his awkwardnesses and uncouth manners; but thrown among inferiors, he was allowed to deteriorate in his habits, and never acquired that dignity of manner which a member of the imperial house was expected to wear. Association with servants had another bad effect on him. They encouraged his baser propensities, humoured his weaknesses, and for their own advantage preyed on his fears, so as to make of him a mere puppet in their hands. Thus by degrees Claudius lost all independence of character, and throughout his life learned to depend for his opinions and for his guidance on those who immediately surrounded him. We have seen from one of the letters of Augustus that this association of Claudius with inferiors was distasteful to him as head of the family; but this was the fault of the family, not of Claudius: the family had elbowed him out of the parlour into the servants' hall.

And yet Claudius was not quite the fool his mother and the rest of the family thought him. Excluded from offices of state, he took up literary pursuits, studied antiquities with zest, and strove to make himself a name with his pen. He worked at his literary pursuits 'with energy.' He did not retire to rest till after midnight, and rose early, to return to his books. Encouraged by the historian Livius, he attempted the composition of a history of the Roman people from the death of Julius Caesar. Having got some little way with it, he invited a number of friends to meet at his house and hear what he had written, and pronounce their judgment upon it. He began to read; but partly owing to his stammering tongue, partly to his manuscript being full of erasures and corrections, he got on very badly with it. Presently the lection was interrupted by a crash and exclamations. A very fat man was among those invited, and under his weight the bench on which he sat gave way and precipitated him on the mosaic floor. This not only occasioned great laughter among the audience, but it so tickled the humour of the reader, that after order was restored, he was unable to continue for more than a sentence or two without a fresh explosion of laughter, and the company broke up without having heard very much of the history of the Roman people.

Somewhat later, when he had carried on his work to the conclusion of the civil wars, he showed it to his mother and grandmother; but he had been too truthful in his record, and had told things that they desired to have forgotten, and they counselled him to suppress his work.

> 'Periculosae plenum opus aleae,
> Tractas et incedis per ignes
> Suppositos cineri doloso.'

He published a defence of Cicero against Asinius Gallus, who had written an attack on the character of the great orator, and Cicero, it

must be admitted, had laid himself open to much hostile criticism. As Asinius Gallus was a man against whom Tiberius felt much bitterness, we may suspect that this defence of Cicero was written with the hopes of obtaining the favour of Tiberius. If so, the author did not gain his object, for Tiberius never gave him any office. He wrote likewise a history of the Etruscans, the loss of which we may well regret; likewise one of the Carthaginians, and a biography of himself, which would unquestionably have been of the greatest interest had it been preserved, though Suetonius speaks of it disparagingly as better in style than the matter deserved. He also composed a Greek comedy and a treatise on dice-playing, with both of which we can well dispense. At the death of Augustus, Claudius was in his twenty-first year, and if he expected a fitting acknowledgment in the will of the late emperor as some atonement for the slights put upon him, he was disappointed. Augustus named him only in the third class of legatees, with those but distantly allied to himself, giving him a trifling legacy. Claudius did not, however, abandon hopes of preferment; not only was he born on the festival of Spes, and on the anniversary of the taking of Alexandria, and on the day when the first altar was erected to the divinity of Augustus, but his own Claudian family was now advanced in the person of Tiberius, his father's brother, and he might well hope that honours would fall in abundance to him.

The equestrian order, to which he belonged—for he did not even rank as a senator,—had chosen him as their representative at the funeral of Augustus, and the knights did not fail to lay aside their cloaks when he entered the theatre, as a token of respect; and the senate ordered the rebuilding of his house at the public cost, when it was accidentally burnt down. But when the senate went further, and desired that Tiberius should allow him to vote in the rank of the consulars, the emperor refused, alleging as his reason the mental incapacity of his nephew, and promised to make the disappointment good to him by a grant of money from his own private income. Claudius, not discouraged, entreated to be given some appointment, but the prince in reply granted him the honorary appendages of a consular, the lictors with their fasces, and sent him forty gold pieces for his fairings and merry-makings during the ensuing festival of the Saturnalia. 'Upon this,' says Suetonius, 'laying aside all hope of advancement, he resigned himself entirely to an indolent life, living in great privacy, one while in his gardens, or in a villa which he had near the city; another while in Campania, where he passed his time in the lowest society, wherefore he got the character of being a drunkard and a gamester in addition to that which he had before, of being a dullard and a clown.'

In the beginning of the year A.D. 20, Agrippina arrived in Italy with the ashes of Germanicus, and Claudius and Drusus, the son of Tiberius, met her at Tarracina, and accompanied her to Rome. On the occasion

of the funeral neither Tiberius nor Livia appeared in public, and Antonia also remained within doors, accommodating her conduct to that of Livia. Claudius and Drusus alone took in it a public part. It was characteristic of the obscurity in which Claudius was kept that when, after the conclusion of the trial of Piso on the accusation of having poisoned Germanicus, Cotta Messalinus proposed a vote in the senate of public thanks to be rendered to 'Tiberius, Livia, Antonia, Agrippina, and Drusus, for having avenged the death of Germanicus,' he forgot to include the name of the brother of the deceased, and it was not till L. Asprenas started up and inquired 'whether he was aware that he had omitted him,' that the name of Claudius was inserted in the motion.

In A.D. 7, when Claudius was in his seventeenth year, Augustus had betrothed him to Aemilia Lepida, the ten-year-old daughter of L. Paullus and Julia, the sister of Agrippina, and the emperor's own grandchild. This engagement never resulted in marriage; for in A.D. 8, Julia, the mother of Aemilia, was banished on the same grounds as her mother had been some years previously, and the engagement was broken off. About seven or eight years after, Aemilia was married to Appius Junius Silanus.

When released from the engagement to Aemilia, Claudius was betrothed to Livia Medullina Camilla, of the illustrious family of the Camilli, which numbered among its ancestors the man who had delivered Rome from the Gauls. Her father had been consul in A.D. 8, and after the early death of his only son, the daughter was sole heiress to the estates and honours of the family—grand enough to make an union desirable between the son of Drusus and the representative of so splendid a house. But on the wedding-day a sudden illness carried off the bride. In her place Claudius took Plautia Urgulanilla. Her father, M. Plautius Silvanus, had been consul, A.D. 2, and then governor of Asia, and next of Illyria. Her mother, Lartia, was the daughter of Urgulania, the confidant of Livia; and this connection Claudius no doubt hoped would be of use to him in furthering his ambition. But the laxity of the conduct of Plautia attracted general notice and condemnation; moreover, strong suspicions attached to her of being implicated in a murder. She bore him a son, Drusus, and a daughter. Claudius had such strong reasons for believing the youngest child to be in reality the offspring of an adulterous intercourse with a freedman, that he divorced his wife, and ordered the child to be exposed. His son, Drusus was betrothed in A.D. 20, at an early age, to the daughter of Sejanus; but death interfered with this arrangement. The boy, a few years later, was choked at Pompeii, when tossing pears into the air and catching them in his mouth.

On the death of Sejanus, we again find Claudius as the head of a deputation of the knights to the consuls, to felicitate them on the fall of the vizier.

After his divorce from Plautia he had entered into marriage again, this time with Aelia Paetina, the daughter of a man of consular dignity, Quintus Aelius Tubero, consul B.C. 11. But this marriage did not last long; for after Aelia had given her husband a daughter, called after her grandmother, Antonia, in A.D. 26, Claudius divorced her, owing to some 'trifling misunderstanding.'

With the death of Tiberius, and the succession of his nephew, Caius, to the throne, the prospects of Claudius appeared momentarily brighter. The new Caesar, out of deference to the general sentiment, elevated his uncle to the consulship, and suffered him to appear at the public games in the place which befitted him, and occasionally to act as the representative of himself when absent. It was said that on the first occasion of the appearance of Claudius in the forum with the insignia of office, an eagle fluttered down and perched on his right shoulder; and when he appeared at the spectacles as the representative of his nephew, the people broke out into shouts of 'Hail to the brother of Germanicus!' A.U.C. 790. A.D. 37. Aet. 46.

But Claudius was made sensible of the capricious nature of Caius during his tenure of office. The young tyrant was offended because his colleague in the consulship had not at once restored the statues of Nero and Drusus. The clouded mind of Caligula took umbrage because his uncle lacked courtly sycophancy, or because he was a ludicrous object with his lurching gait and vacant eyes, and he subjected him to the grossest indignities. The emperor's boon companions were encouraged to make sport of his reputed imbecility. If he appeared, as was often the case, too late at table, then he was obliged to make the circuit of the room, looking for a place, and take what he could get, for no one attempted to make room for him. 'When he indulged himself with sleep after eating, which was his common practice, then the company pelted him with olive-stones and dates. Moreover, the buffoons who were in attendance, would wake him, as a jest, with a cane or a whip. Sometimes they put slippers on his hands, as he lay snoring, that he might, upon awaking, rub his face with them.'

Seneca, or whoever wrote the *Ludus de morte Claudi*, certainly a contemporary, attests that he received blows from a whip and a stick, and had his ears boxed by his nephew, and adds that Caius only spared his life that he might have the pleasure of making mock of him.

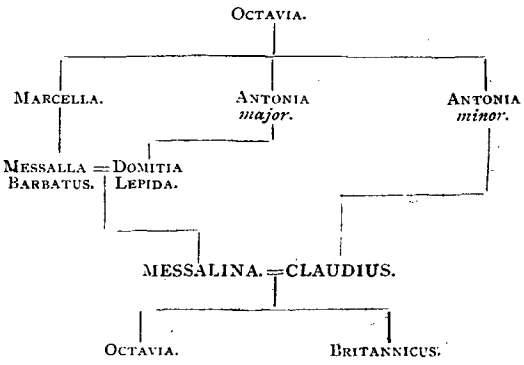
About A.D. 38, perhaps the year before that of his consulate, when the prospect before him was smiling, Claudius had entered on his third marriage, and that with Valeria Messalina. She was the daughter of M. Valerius Messalla Barbatus and Domitia Lepida. M. Valerius Messalla was the son of Appius Clodius Pulcher, but he had been adopted by M. Valerius Messalla, consul in B.C. 53. Messalla Barbatus had married Marcella, daughter of Octavia, the sister of Augustus, and Marcellus. Her father, as well as her mother, were the first cousins

of Claudius. She herself inherited a double stream of the sacred Julian blood, the stream came to her through both her father and her mother —a fact she did not forget. She was very young, only sixteen, when she married the feeble, half-paralysed Claudius, and he was thrice her age.

The marriages of Claudius had hitherto not been happy; this one was to prove the most unhappy of all. Of a marriage of affection there could be no question, at least on her side; not only because her husband was nigh on fifty, but also because of his bodily and mental infirmities, and of his uncouth, and even repulsive habits.

Domitia Lepida, the mother of Messalina, was the youngest sister of Domitius Ahenobarbus, the husband of Agrippina, and father of the youthful Nero. Her elder sister, who bore the same name, was married to Crispus Passienus, who at the instigation of Agrippina, had divorced her. Consequently, both sisters were at deadly enmity with Agrippina.

In A.D. 39, when Caius had discovered a conspiracy whilst he was with the army of the Rhine, and had put to death M. Aemilius Lepidus, and Cn. Lentulus Gaetulicus, and had banished his sisters to the Ponza Isles,—the senate sent a deputation with Claudius at its head, to congratulate the emperor on his escape from the conspirators. Caius was offended. He said: 'Am I a boy, requiring supervision, that they send my uncle to me?' and ordered Claudius to be jostled into the Rhine. He was picked out, and dismissed. Caius ordered that no honours or dignities were to be given to any member of the imperial family without his consent. Although a promise had been made to Claudius that he should hold the consulate for a second time, for A.D. 40, this promise Claudius saw was not likely to be fulfilled, and when, on the 1st January A.D. 40, Caius entered on his third consulate, it was without a colleague. On his return to Rome, the crazy emperor had himself deified as Jupiter Latiaris, and appointed his uncle, as well as his own wife, Caesonia, and the principal members of



the noble families of Rome to be his priests; for receiving this honour, each had to pay the emperor eight millions of sesterces. Claudius was a poor man, and as he was unable to make up this sum for a barren honour, all the estates he possessed were confiscated and sold by auction.

The long protracted series of humiliations Claudius had undergone had blunted his self-respect. He accepted the impertinences of the courtiers, the insults of his nephew, without resentment, as part of the conduct towards himself to which he had been accustomed, though in a less acute form, from earliest boyhood; and when, shortly after, the power came into his hands, he did not punish one of those who had treated him with contumely. He is shown to us as a man who never forgot a kindness and never remembered an injury.

For himself he was without great ambition. His interests lay not in making the history of his own times, but in unravelling that of the past. Antonia was right when she spoke of him as an incomplete production of Nature; his mind was ill balanced, he had abilities of no ordinary kind in some directions, he was impotent as a child in others. He was kindly, good-hearted, well-intentioned, but without the faculty of sympathising with, of understanding suffering. He could look on with callous indifference at a butchery of gladiators, and yet willingly he would not have caused any blood to flow.

Tiberius had undergone somewhat the same treatment as Claudius; he had been set aside, thrust into the background, flouted, though never subjected to the last indignities to which Claudius was exposed by his nephew. On both it had the same effect—it made both timorous and shy; but it had also a different effect—it made Tiberius proud in his self-reserve, whereas it destroyed in Claudius all his native dignity. Tiberius, feeling himself misunderstood, and disliking the society of the nobility, withdrew into himself, and shut himself out from association with mankind which he despised; Claudius despised no one but himself, and instead of withdrawing from society courted it,—not indeed that of the nobility, but of the common citizens, the freedmen and the buffoons, with whom he could joke, and drink and be merry, and who exacted of him no imperial stateliness, no princely dignity. To such a degree had he lost his self-respect in this association that he gave free vent to little coarsenesses at meals, only tolerable among mule-drivers and porters, and when he was emperor, finding these habits gave offence, and that he could not break himself of them, he issued an edict to permit such grossnesses in cultured society,—to the great amusement of the Roman people.

Repeatedly, in the senate, Claudius, when emperor, asserted that he had feigned stupidity, under Tiberius and Caius, 'as only by so doing had he any prospect of attaining to the high offices he had reached,' and though the senate made semblance of believing him, they laughed in

their sleeves, and circulated a pamphlet relative to this assertion headed 'The Resurrection of Fools.'

But the mind of Claudius was not that of a fool, it was a noble mind unhinged, and he had a noble nature untrained. Through the clouds that obscured his thoughts flashed original and masterly ideas, and although weak and yielding to impulses, and so committing great wrongs, he was able to achieve great acts of right, and notably to alleviate many hardships and distresses under which the people suffered.

Twenty-four years of childhood and youth had been spent under Augustus, twenty-two more in retirement and obscurity under Tiberius, four in contumely and danger under Caius, and now suddenly he was thrust into the first place in the world.

Of portraits of Claudius in his younger days we have none that we can with any confidence identify.[1]

That his bust was made and set up is not improbable, for at all events in the colonies and provinces he received from the first a recognition denied him in Rome. Thus there was a group of statuary at Pavia, over one of the gates, in which he was represented, and inscriptions in his honour have been found at Pola, Troas, Tibur, Pompeii, Mantua, Nepete, and Chios, set up long before he was emperor. But the busts were not numerous.

III.—THE FIRST YEARS.

CLAUDIUS had escaped the sword of the guard to be raised to the throne. He found himself emperor before he had ceased to tremble at his escape from death.

A.U.C. 794. A.D. 41. Aet. 50. He had been proclaimed by the military—with him indeed was initiated the series of military proclamations—and he had been recognised, though with reluctance, by the senate. He owed his elevation to no quality that could command the enthusiasm of the soldiery or the respect of the senators. He had neither served with the colours, nor had he appeared on the political stage. He owed his elevation solely to the fact of his having some drops of Julian blood in his veins. But there were others with quite as much, if not more, of this sacred *ichor*: notably his own wife Messalina, who had it in double portion. There was Quintilius Varus, who also reckoned Octavia as his great-grandmother; there were three Junii Silani, men of wealth and high position, whose mother was Aemilia Lepida, and who therefore also claimed descent from Octavia, and there were the two sisters of the late emperor, his own nieces, both ambitious women, one the mother of a son who, as the grandchild of Germanicus, was invested with ideal sacredness in the eyes of the people.

[1] Except one in the Capitoline Museum. (Sala delle Colombe, No. 58.)

The principle of heredity was not formulated; but the praetorian guards considered themselves as bound by their oath to the Caesarean house; and descent from the Julian race long after afforded a claim to the throne, and exposed all whose descent was certain to observation, suspicion and danger.

The only thread attaching Claudius to the divine race was through Octavia, his grandmother on his mother's side. But if on one side he could boast of this attachment to the sacred tree, on the other, it could not be forgotten that his mother was the daughter of Mark Antony, the great opponent of Octavius. The first solicitude therefore of the new emperor was to assume the name of Caesar, whereby to engraft himself, according to the ideas of adoption then prevalent, into the Caesarean family, and to become its legitimate representative. This step was followed by an exhibition of filial piety towards the imperial race. He declared that the oath 'By Augustus!' would thenceforth be his most solemn asseveration, and he appointed himself priest of the deified Augustus; he struck coins that bore the head of Octavius, surrounded by rays, or amidst seven stars, or represented his statue as borne on a chariot drawn by four elephants.

There were two famous paintings by Apelles in Rome, one representing Alexander with the goddess of Victory and the Dioscuri, the other, Alexander, on a chariot drawing the god of war after him with bound hands. Claudius had the faces of Alexander altered into the features of Augustus. Livia received the highest honours. Tiberius had objected to her apotheosis, Claudius canonised her, and her head was impressed on medals; statues were erected to her in temples in the provinces, and the emperor himself dedicated her idealised statue in the Augusteum, and made the worship of Livia one of the functions of the vestals. He ordered, moreover, that on solemn occasions her image should be taken round the circus on a car drawn by two elephants. Races were appointed in her honour, and the oath 'By Livia!' made one lawful and sacred for women.

Claudius, moreover, honoured in various ways the memory of his own parents, of his brother Germanicus, and his sister-in-law Agrippina. So also did he treat with respect the memory of the two last emperors, and honoured them as far as public opinion suffered him to do so. A marble triumphal arch was erected near the theatre of Pompeius in honour of Tiberius, and his birthday, the 16th December, and the day of his victory over the Illyrians, the 3d August, were appointed to be kept as festivals.

In the cabinet of gems at Vienna is a magnificent sardonyx that represents four busts, rising out of horns of plenty, two male in the forefront, behind these two female heads. That on the left in the forefront is certainly Claudius, and almost as certainly opposite him is Tiberius with the deified Livia, as Roma, with laurel-wreathed helm,

precisely as she is represented on another famous cameo, the Apotheosis of Augustus. Along with Claudius is Messalina.[1]

Even towards the memory of Caligula all possible forbearance was shown. The senate wished to appoint the day of his murder as a festival of thanksgiving for delivery from a monster. This Claudius refused to permit. He had his statues removed by night, and his name struck out of the official formularies of prayer and oath-taking. A few years later, we find coins struck with the head of Claudius on one side and that of his predecessor on the other.

The sisters of Caligula, Agrippina and Julia, were recalled from banishment, and their property that had been confiscated was restored to them.

Claudius, moreover, in contradistinction to the policy of his predecessor, treated with honour the last representatives of the Julian race. Lucius Junius Silanus was a son of the great-granddaughter of Augustus, Aemilia Lepida; he betrothed him to his own daughter Octavia, then in her tenderest infancy.

He recalled C. Appius Silanus, the father of his intended son-in-law, from Spain, where he was governor, and married him to his own mother-in-law, Domitia Lepida. By this means, Appius Silanus obtained as his second wife a woman who was descended from the imperial family, as had been his first, the mother of his sons.

In like manner did he treat the Licinii, another very illustrious family, not indeed inheriting the Julian blood, but descended on one hand from Scribonia, the mother of the only daughter of Octavius, the founder of the monarchy, and on the other from the triumvirs, Pompeius and Crassus. However insignificant the head of this family might be, the consular, M. Licinius Crassus Frugi, yet, as his son bore the name of Cn. Pompeius Magnus, which came to him through his grandmother Pompeia, on his mother's side, the daughter of Sextus Pompeius, this had excited the jealousy and suspicion of Caligula, who had forbidden his bearing the name. Claudius not only restored to him the name, but married him to his daughter Antonia.

Claudius had none of the craving for Oriental pomp and circumstance of royalty that had fevered the brain of his nephew. He loved simplicity, and after he was prince lived very much as he had lived before. He had refused to assume the title of Imperator as a praenomen, and refused that divine adoration which had become customary

[1] Bernoulli tries to make out that the heads opposite Claudius and Messalina are Germanicus and Agrippina *major*. But the resemblance to Tiberius, though idealised, is hardly to be gainsaid. It is true the forehead has not the usual height, but there was a reason for it being shortened, so as to allow for the crista of the helmet of Livia to appear above it. The mouth and chin are certainly those of Tiberius. Agrippina could not be represented as Roma, and the profile is not in the least like hers. Livia is represented as Roma elsewhere, and the profile is that of the deified Livia. It is true that Tiberius and Livia are represented as young, but that is because they have passed into the region of the gods.

under his predecessor. When he appeared in public, he would not suffer himself to be approached with servile bows, and to be addressed in terms of extravagant respect. When he attended the opening of the new theatre of Pompeius that had been burnt down, but which he restored, he wore the imperial mantle only at the outset, then cast it aside for the senatorial toga. He allowed no gladiatorial shows to be given 'for his wellbeing,' and when the senate voted to him statues, he accepted three only, and declined the rest, on the grounds that it was a bit of idle extravagance, and put people to inconvenience; as it was, he said, the town was overcrowded with statues. On his birthday he would allow merely the ordinary races celebrated on that day in commemoration of the dedication of the temple of Mars Ultor; when he attended festivities at Naples towards the end of the year, he and his attendants appeared in Greek dress, and lived as private individuals. He even contested for the prize in music, and when he had to dispose of the prizes at the gymnastic games, he wore the senatorial and not the imperial habit.

The betrothal and marriage of his daughters were conducted without display, and neither did the senate adjourn its sittings, nor did Claudius neglect his magisterial duties on account of them. No public festival was made on the birth of a son to Antonia; and his sons-in-law remained in their offices and positions as before. The only difference made was that they were taken into the number of the Twenty men, and into the college of the Arval brothers. Even the permission to enter on offices of state five years before the legal period was not granted to them at first.

In the private circle of the prince, Valeria Messalina was the person of chief consequence, not only because of her descent on both sides from the Julian family, but also because her husband was passionately attached to her. She ruled him completely, and he suffered her to follow her own caprices, not only in private, but also to deal with matters of state in a most arbitrary manner. She was not in the least enamoured of her doting husband. As a young girl of seventeen she was suddenly raised to a dizzy height, and was entirely without principle of any kind to control her conduct. She found herself flattered and admired by the dissolute nobles and ladies of Roman society, found herself able to make her husband do anything she chose to ask him, and was aware that he himself held her in awe, and showed her deference because she stood nearer to the sacred line than himself.

Messalina had given to Claudius a daughter, Octavia, whilst Caius was on the throne; twenty days after the accession of her husband she bore him a son, who received the name Tiberius Claudius Germanicus, but who is known in history as Britannicus. This event occasioned great rejoicings in the palace. It seemed to ensure the succession to the Claudian-Julian house; otherwise the nearest male heir was the

son of Agrippina the Younger by Domitius Ahenobarbus. But though rejoicing at the prospect of being able to pass on the succession to a son who would combine the rights derived from his mother as well as from his father, Claudius was full of apprehension for his own security. The terrors of that January night were not so easily shaken off. For thirty days after it, he remained hidden in the palace, surrounded by a cordon of guards. His son was born on the 17th February, and it was not till ten days after this that he was able sufficiently to master his apprehensions and appear in the senate, and then to visit the praetorians in their camp, carrying the babe in his arms, and as a proud father, to exhibit him to the military. The delight of the emperor in his son was so great, and exhibited with such frankness, that it pleased the people. In the theatre he danced his babe before their eyes, or sat him on his lap, and when the populace cheered he held the little creature out, crowing with delight to their enthusiastic plaudits.

But no proofs of favour shown him by the people could reassure Claudius against the haunting dread of assassination. At table a military guard occupied the hall, and soldiers waited on him with the dishes. Every one who sought an audience had to submit to a rigorous search, and even their stylus-holders were removed, as it was in these that the daggers had been concealed wherewith the great Caesar had been murdered. It was not till late on in his reign that Claudius exempted women and children from this search before they were admitted to his presence. Not only so, but when the prince paid a visit to the sick, which he often did, in his kindly interest in his friends, their rooms, beds, pillows were all submitted to examination before the emperor would enter.

On the birth of the young prince the senate decreed the title of Augustus and Augusta to the child and to Messalina, but Claudius declined it for both; in the provinces, however, the highest honours were accorded to the empress and her children. Messalina was entitled Augusta, and was represented with divine emblems as Ceres, upon medals, with the horn of plenty in her left hand, and her children on her right; and Britannicus was figured either alone or between his sisters as a special gift of the gods.

Even before the birth of his son to gladden his heart, Claudius had shown to the people that his intention was to rule with mildness, and not to avenge injuries. After the pattern of the Athenians, he passed an act of perpetual oblivion and pardon for every thing done during the days of commotion when Caius was murdered, exempting from clemency only Chaerea and Lupus, 'both as an example, and also because he understood that they had planned his own assassination also.' Saturninus, unwilling to survive his comrade, threw himself on his sword. Claudius extended his favour not only to those who had declared themselves against his election, but even to those who had set

themselves up as rival candidates, and advanced them to offices and honours.

The attention of the emperor was called immediately on his accession to the urgent necessities of the city, through failure of supply of corn. The officers in charge of the granaries announced to him that they had supplies for seven or eight days only. The senseless conduct of Caius in laying his hands on all merchant vessels wherewith to construct his useless bridge had checked the conveyance of wheat to the city. No one had ventured to remonstrate with the madman, and to point out to him the famine that impended. It must be remembered that every citizen drew from the granaries sufficient corn for his household at a reduced price, and that about two hundred thousand of the poorer inhabitants received free daily distribution of wheat. But now the source whence all the thousands of the population were fed was drying up; and although the cause of this famine was due to the folly of the last ruler, the fact of its existence was certain to imperil the position of the new one.

With energy and promptitude Claudius met the danger before it became serious. He had the bridge broken up and the boats at once commissioned to bring corn from Egypt, and whatever material had been accumulated which would not serve for this purpose was devoted to the improvement and enlargement of the harbour constructed by Vipsanius Agrippa. At the same time, special privileges were granted to private ventures to relieve the pressing necessity and prevent its recurrence. Whoever built a ship that would contain a stipulated amount of corn, and should employ it for six years in the grain traffic, was to be rewarded with the Roman citizenship; if the venturers were Latins, they were to be relieved from certain charges; if citizens, and merchants on a large scale, they were exempted from all charges.

The treasury, moreover, undertook to indemnify the corn merchants for losses by shipwreck, and guaranteed vessels run aground against being pillaged by wreckers. By this promptitude the immediate danger was averted; and although some time elapsed before the deficiency already caused by the folly of Caligula could be made up, yet the senate recognised, by the issue of a medal bearing the figure of Ceres Augusta, and the legend *Ob cives servatos*, that the relief of the city from famine was due to the wise measures adopted by the new ruler.

Simultaneously with this energetic action for the sustenance of the citizens went relief from the more serious exactions laid on them by his predecessor. But in this Claudius did not act with inconsiderate precipitation. He removed the burdens one by one, and the coinage which had been debased by Caius was now restored to its proper value.

He then took into consideration the cases of such as had been exiled, and here again he acted with discretion. Each case was considered separately, and if an injustice had been committed, the banished

person was recalled and his confiscated goods restored to him. So also with respect to those languishing in the prisons. Only real criminals were left in gaol; and all those estates and fortunes that had been appropriated by Caius or Tiberius were returned to the expropriated, if alive, if not, to their children. The papers of Caligula, among which were two books, *The Dagger* and *The Sword*, containing lists of those citizens whom he proposed to destroy, also all those letters and registers relating to the conspiracy of Sejanus, which Caius, with so much parade, had pretended to burn in the senate-house—these Claudius now produced, allowed the senators to look at and recognise their own signatures, and peruse their own incriminating correspondence, and then he destroyed them before their eyes.

Caius had knocked a hole through the end of the sanctuary of the temple of the Dioscuri in the forum, and had converted it into a sort of porter's lodge to his palace on the Palatine above. Claudius restored the temple, and gave back to it several works of art that had been carried off from it by Caius.

Having released the prisoners and restored the exiles suffering for political offences, Claudius now abolished the law of treason, which had hung like a sword over the heads of the Roman nobility and knights for twenty-five years. Moreover, he solemnly promised that thenceforth no freeman should be placed on the rack to extort from him a confession. It had become customary, it had been made compulsory, that every testator should make the emperor one of his legatees; but Claudius forbade this proceeding, and when he found that bequests fell to him from citizens he restored them to the rightful heirs.

Claudius behaved with respect towards the senate and the officers of state. He referred all the more important measures that he contemplated to the senate, and would not enter the assembly with his guards in attendance without their permission. He seated himself between the consuls, and only rarely on the curule chair which had been occupied by the Caesars since A.D. 19. When the consuls entered the senate house he stood up and advanced to meet them; and when the governors of provinces thanked him for their promotion, or for continuing them in their offices, 'It is not for you to thank me,' he answered, with as much truth as courtesy, 'but for me to thank you for administering your office righteously and relieving me of care.'

The populace of Rome probably regarded Claudius with less favour than did the superior classes; for it had been mainly on the latter that the hand of Caius had lain heavy, whereas he had kept the former amused with spectacles and sports. These not only encouraged idleness but cost the treasury vast sums, and Claudius set to work to curtail their number and reduce their splendour. Every festival was celebrated by races and gladatorial shows, and if any technicality in the ritual on such occasions was transgressed the whole had to be gone through

again, so that sometimes games designed to be performed on one day were protracted over two. Claudius put a stop to this by insisting that they should not be repeated on any excuse, and he moreover reduced the number of festivals in the Roman calendar. As each holy day was a day on which neither the senate nor the courts of justice could sit, and shops were closed and all mercantile business was brought to a standstill, and as the number of these festivals amounted to two-thirds of the days in the year, the inconvenience was considerable. Augustus had abolished thirty festivals, but under Tiberius fresh holy days had been appointed, and Caius had further increased the number. It was true that to the general populace the inconvenience was not such as would exist in a modern city, as they received their largesses of corn daily, and were therefore not concerned to earn their livelihood; but the vast number of holy days interfered gravely with the work in the courts of justice, and it was precisely this work that had paramountly interested Claudius. He attended the pleadings in the forum, in the courts of the various officers, 'daily and nightly' with real zest; regardless of many a festival, he occupied his seat to dispense justice to the citizens when every other court was closed; even in the burning heats of July and August he took his place in the senate, sometimes with assessors, sometimes without. Old and infirm though he was, he was indefatigable in conducting judicial investigations; and it is said that when he rose to retire for a brief meal, and a suitor plucked him by the robe or held his feet, he would patiently return to his chair and postpone his hour of refreshment. This devotion to business amused the idle Romans and provoked their contempt, which found its vent in many an anecdote retailed by his biographers, but which we may not trust too confidently. On one occasion a Greek who was in a suit, not being satisfied with the justice administered by Claudius, shouted out to him, 'You are an old fool!'

A Roman knight was so offended at Claudius suffering women of abandoned character to be produced in evidence against him that he threw some books he had in his hands and his steel style in the face of the imperial judge, with such violence as to cause blood to flow from his cheek.

A suitor making excuses for the non-appearance of a witness on his side, gave as one of them that the man was dead. 'That excuse is sufficient,' said Claudius drily.

Claudius was laughed at if he good-naturedly gave up his mid-day meal to listen to a case, and laughed at if he yielded to hunger. One day, whilst seated in the forum, the smell of roast came to his nostrils from the courts of the Salii. He jumped out of his seat and tottered away to the place whence the savoury fumes issued, to beg a mouthful. He was laughed at for sitting so long in court, laughed at if he sometimes fell asleep whilst listening to the harangues of the advo-

cates; and it was forgotten that Claudius slept badly at night, never retiring to his bed till after midnight, and rising early.

'However this passion for judicial functions might be open to caricature, and however his intellectual infirmities might betray themselves in occasional haste, frivolity, or indecision, the conduct of Claudius seems to have been actuated by a sincerely beneficent intention, and shows beyond dispute the principles of moderation and equity which distinguished him. A man can hardly be naturally a tyrant who takes pleasure in meting out justice and deciding questions of right. It was with real satisfaction, therefore, we may believe, that Claudius suppressed the laws of high treason, and forbade the practice of delation.'[1]

According to Suetonius, in his judgments 'he was most unequal, sometimes prudent and discerning, sometimes hasty and inconsiderate, sometimes even absurd and silly.' No historians have recorded instances of his conduct in the first category, but the legal codes show good evidence of both his prudence and discernment. For instance, the Lex Claudia introduced and carried by him removed women from being under guardianship to agnates, and he promulgated the law that the *peculium* of a son still standing under the *patria potestas* was not to be touched, in the event of the father's property being distrained upon for debt to the treasury. One of his enactments shows that he had milder and more humane views with respect to the slaves than had any of his predecessors. He ordained that those slaves who were sick, and had been exposed by their masters in the temple of Æsculapius on the Tiberine isle, should, if they recovered, obtain their freedom; and he startled Roman indifference to the sufferings of the servile population by forbidding masters to rid themselves of old and infirm servants by putting them to death: such masters as thus acted he declared to be guilty of murder.

One of the decrees issued by Claudius is of particular interest to us, as it relates to the exhibition of portrait statuary. In the year A.D. 45, having found that the old *jus imaginum* had fallen into disregard, and that any man of means who chose set up his statue or bust, just as nowadays any rich man assumes a coat-of-arms without troubling the Heralds' College for a grant, Claudius issued a rescript forbidding any man from erecting his portrait statue or bust in any public place or building without licence from the senate.

Though Claudius suffered in popularity among the rabble by his reduction of the number of shows and by his avoidance of display, so that they decked with flowers the sepulchre of Chaerea, not as honouring him for having rid them of Caligula, but as a hint that they would gladly be rid of Claudius, yet among the more sober his kindliness, his simplicity, his attention to business, and his homely virtues engaged their affection and respect. Moreover, the old palsied emperor under-

[1] Merivale, vi. p. 125.

took public works that were of real utility. The aqueduct of the Aqua Virgo had been broken through by Caius for the sake of making a theatre. Claudius repaired it. But his most important work was the construction of a harbour at Ostia. At the outset of his imperial career he had met the difficulty of a threatened famine in Rome. But difficulties were continually arising owing to there being no harbour on the coasts of Latium at all suitable to the demands of a great city. Ostia, on the left side of the mouth of the Tiber, had been filled with sand in the time of Caesar, and many projects had been made for the construction of a new harbour, but nothing had been done, and vessels were obliged to anchor outside the mole, and to partly unlade into lighters at sea before they could proceed up the Tiber to the wharfs below Rome. Claudius proposed the excavation of an artificial basin, to be in connection with the river by a canal. The engineers protested that the scheme was impracticable. Claudius remained obstinate in his conviction that the thing not only could be done, but was the only practicable solution of the difficulty. He persisted in his scheme, and it proved successful. The cost was enormous, but the necessity was of the highest.

Another of his plans was the draining of Lake Fucinus. In this he was less successful, owing either to incorrect levelling by the engineer employed or to the fraud of the freedman Narcissus, to whom the charge had been committed. He brought to the city the Aqua Claudia in the splendid aqueduct the arches of which form so picturesque an object on the Campagna; and also the limpid waters of the Anio Nova in another of hardly inferior magnificence.

When the reins of government fell to the hands of Claudius, it was at a moment when it needed a shrewd head and a cool judgment to bring the reeling chariot of the State into its proper course. The assassination of Caius revived the memory of the assassination of Julius Caesar, and had excited wild hopes of a recurrence to the old condition of affairs before the threads of government were gathered into one hand. 'Abroad,' says Mr. Furneaux, 'Caius had unsettled everything and settled nothing, had pillaged Gaul, stirred up the long slumbering hostility of the German tribes, driven Palestine into open rebellion, flouted the deputations sent to plead for the persecuted Jews of Alexandria, had created or deposed vassal princes at the humour of his caprice, and, by the murder or detention of their legitimate rulers, had left Mauritania a prey to war, Commagene to anarchy, and had abandoned the great kingdom of Armenia to the control of Parthia.'[1]

Some justice must be done to Claudius, this dotard as he is represented, when we find that the difficulties of the empire were met so readily and prudently. Whether it was by him or by his advisers, certain it is that measures the most just and well-timed were taken

[1] Furneaux, *Tacitus*, vol. ii. p. 24.

that averted the danger threatened. If Claudius did not originate them, he had at least the wisdom to give them force and see to their being executed.

A good many statues and busts of Claudius remain, by which we are able to form a tolerable estimate of his appearance. The old and venerable head was, indeed, set on an ill-proportioned body, but the sculptors who rendered his features with fidelity thought themselves excused from following nature too severely in the representation of his full paunch and feeble legs. Yet in the toga-clad statue in the Vatican (Fig. 90) the dragging foot is indicated as well as the general physical and intellectual feebleness.

'If his figure,' says Dean Merivale, 'as we are told, was tall, and when sitting appeared not ungraceful, his face, at least in repose, was eminently handsome. But it is impossible not to remark in it an expression of pain and anxiety which forcibly arrests our sympathy. It is the face of an honest and well-meaning man, who feels himself unequal to the task imposed upon him. There is a look of perplexity in which he may have pored over the mysteries of Etruscan lore, carried to the throne of the world, and engaged in the deepest problems of finance and citizenship. There is the expression of fatigue both of mind and body, which speaks of midnight watches over books, varied with midnight carouses at the imperial table and the fierce caresses of rival mistresses. There is the glance of fear, not of open enemies, but of pretended friends; the reminiscence of wanton blows and the anticipation of the deadly potion. Above all, there is the anxious glance of dependence, which seems to cast about for a model to imitate, for ministers to shape a policy, and for satellites to execute it.'[1]

To this admirable appreciation of the portraits of Claudius I will add a few more, but none, to my mind, quite so good.

M. Mayor, on the Chiaramonti head (No. 18), observes: 'The jaw is small; the glandular region large, almost puffed. Claudius was scrofulous. The face still young, with precocious and deep wrinkles on the brow; the frontal bone projecting in the region between the brows and at the upper orbital and upper nasal points. Expression sad and dazed. Mouth tremulous with tears (*Bouche pleurade*); an hereditary *rictus* of the upper lip. Ears projecting. Asymmetry; the right ear further out, and the largest. So also with the left eye. The right eye highest; the left cheek largest and pendulous. Brow and chin regular.' On the statue in the Chiaramonti Gallery (No. 117) he remarks: 'The aspect is one of suffering and sadness, with shadows of hesitation, fear, and embarrassment. It is the Claudius of history—the man with no other will than that of his immediate surroundings. Face drawn to the left. The right ear more detached than the left.' On the colossal bust in the Vatican (No. 551) he says: 'A marked irregularity. The left eye

[1] Merivale, vi. pp. 11, 12.

longer—higher than the right.' (This is contrary to the bust in the Chiaramonti, where the left eye is lower.) 'The portion between the brows is prominent. Ears stick out; much disengaged. The glandular region swollen.' This inflation of the glands, indicative of scrofula, is found in nearly all the portraits, busts, and statues of Claudius. M. Mayor notices the *air pleurad* in nearly every representation of the unhappy man placed in a position for which he was eminently unsuited by nature.

Viktor Rydberg says: 'It is impossible to reproach the Roman art of portraiture with flattery. It gave what the Romans insisted on—rigid fidelity to nature. It made no exception in favour of the Caesars and their house, not even for the women. Proofs of this almost repulsive fidelity to nature are to be found. An empress, arrived at a more than mature age, is to be represented as Venus. It is possible that she would be glad to decline the honour. She belongs to that period in life when old ladies drape their withered beauties; but she has duties as Caesar's spouse, and must resign herself to her fate. The goddess of love was the ancestress of the Julian race; and so her attributes, but not her beauty, descend to the empress, much as do the attributes of St. Peter, though not always his virtues and faith, to the reigning Pope. The artist has to immortalise her undraped charms, and he does it with almost brutal frankness, so that the little cupid, with finger to his mouth, at her feet, seems to sigh, "O for a curtain." . . . And as to Claudius: in the Vatican statue of this emperor as Jupiter, the sculptor has, so to speak, wrought into the marble the Greek word used by Augustus to characterise Claudius—his *meteoria*. When we hear that word we represent to ourselves a floating in boundless space, amid vapours; an irresolute life, spent in vague dreams, directed, or rather undirected, by a feeble will, crossed by flashes of lofty purpose. His was Hamlet's life; one reads it with surprising clearness in every line of the statue. His is a well-formed head, against which, from the point of beauty, one can take no exception, save perhaps that the oval of the face is somewhat too compressed. The broad forehead is overcast with clouds of melancholy. The eyes disclose, with their unsteady, sad, and kindly look, a plodding and suffering spirit, that is conscious of its noble birth, but is unable to maintain its freedom. The mouth is well modelled, and indicates a refinement of feeling one would not have expected here, but which, on an impartial investigation of Claudius's nature, comes to light. The bearing is noble, but overstrained; the formation of the body irreproachable, save for the narrow shoulders. The whole makes a painful yet winning impression. We seem to see unhappiness that has a right to plead for sympathy, and weakness coupled with too much good for it to awaken only contempt. The rotunda of the Vatican has also an excellent bust of the same emperor, and the Lateran has in its keeping another, an

enthroned statue, and the latter also is a good work of art. They all speak well of their original, and all seem to show that their creators loved their work. That love of their task which one discovers—it is not possible to say how—has not always worked well with eye and taste on the Roman emperors. One finds it in the statues of Claudius, in the beautiful Vatican Nerva, in certain of the best portraits of Trajan, and of Antoninus Pius—but otherwise, rarely. . . . One reads in the face of Claudius the evidence of grief over defeat in the struggle between the inner law and the law of the flesh. Study and plodding attention to duties were the only safeguards against the temptations of his senses; and when he was thus absorbed in the world of thought and dreams, objects passed before his eye without his seeing them, voices sounded in his ears without his hearing them, events happened convulsing all around without interesting him. His soul was a camera obscura, that caught a slender ray of light and left all else in darkness; his was a noble soul in chains. Unhappily, such weakness is often more rigorously judged than strength of will that has no chains at all—not even those of conscience—to shake off.'

Ampère has been unusually happy in his account of Claudius. Usually prepossessed with his anti-Napoleonic antagonism, he looks out for some trace of the First or Third Napoleon in the earlier Roman emperors, and girds through them at his enemies. But in Claudius he could see nothing Napoleonic, and could therefore consider him without prejudice. He says: 'Claudius had received a thick envelope from nature, and in all his movements there was a *gaucherie* and heaviness which threw up into greater prominence the amiable and brilliant qualities of his brother Germanicus. At an early age he was a butt to the sarcasms of his grandmother Livia and his mother Antonia; he was, so to speak, the family Cinderella. Like the brothers of sultans who are destined not to reign, he spent his youth indolently in the palace, surrounded by women and freedmen, in the midst of those easy luxuries to which he was always inclined. But it is worth observing that he alone of the Caesarean family deserves the praise of being free from a certain set of vices; treated with contempt, abandoned to ridicule and outrage, he came to despise himself and lose his self-respect. His was an intelligence going to pieces, never without some greatness. In some points, Claudius was grotesque, sometimes gruesome; in some points he merits our admiration, but spiced with equal portions of pity and ridicule. Hence the contradictions presented by this soul smothered by a clumsy and degenerate body; but as Augustus, who knew men well, said of him, "When his mind was not gone wool-gathering, there was perceptible in him a natural nobility."

'After this study of the quaint and unhappy Claudius, one can understand the beauty of his portraits, in which the soul, entangled and lost in a gross material, gleams out with sad and sombre light. His

soul seems to be struggling with its wrap, and the fact of this struggle is shown by the profound melancholy of his countenance, such as one can imagine possessed those genii in Oriental tales, that have been sealed up in jars.'

IV.—THE FREEDMEN.

THE man who had been thrust in childhood and youth from association with those of his birth and position, when suddenly elevated to the throne brought with him into power the associates he had been forced

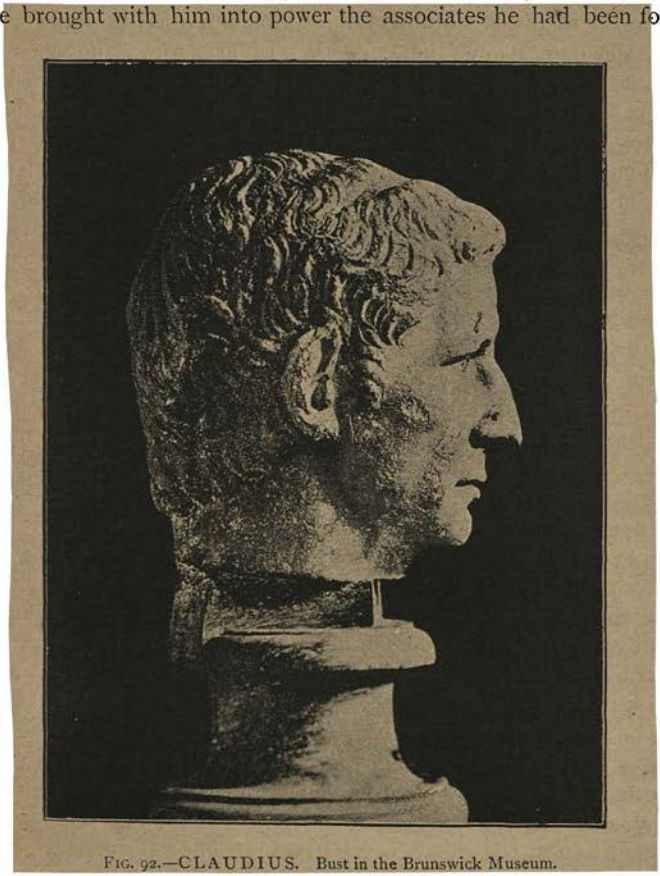


FIG. 92.—CLAUDIUS. Bust in the Brunswick Museum.

to make. The only persons with whom he had joked and drunk, or studied and declaimed, had been Greek emancipated slaves; and, grateful to them for having shown him some deference—been to him comrades in the time of his debasement—Claudius was ready to recompense them when he had the power so to do. The freedmen in the imperial palace formed a class that had already proved its influence. They had done services to their lords that no man of the Roman plebs would have

undertaken, not to speak of members of the equestrian and aristocratic families; and in return for their services those recommendations of suitors for office who had bribed them had been listened to.

The kindly, generous manner of Julius Caesar, and his unique genius, had attached to him men of Roman birth and honourable ancestry, who had willingly lent him their aid. 'The ascendancy he naturally exercised over all that came in contact with him enabled him to secure the spontaneous services of men of birth and consideration hardly inferior to his own. 'Such were the stewards of his revenues, the managers of his public and private benevolences, Romans in birth and blood, men attached to him by real friendship, who felt that they could ply without disgrace before his acknowledged superiority. But even the inheritor of a throne had no such personal influence as Nature's emperor, the first of the Caesars. Augustus, great as he was in genius, as well as in station, scarcely found such willing subservience among the citizens of his own country. He had recourse to the venal attachment of his freedmen, whose fidelity exacted no requital, and hardly expected an acknowledgment; and of these he held many in intimacy, and cultivated their esteem. He neither required of them degrading services, nor again did he suffer them to gorge themselves with the spoils of his suitors. He enjoyed the solace of their intimacy; and when most anxious for privacy, and the ever-coveted respite from the formalities of patrician life, it was in the suburban villa of one of these humble ministers that he would disburden himself of the cares of his station. Tiberius, whose strict self-discipline, at least till the latter years of his retirement, was even more severe and unremitting, allowed himself no such relaxation; his freedmen were few in numbers, and seem to have enjoyed no portion of his confidence. The perturbed spirit of Caius was agitated by restless furies which never suffered him to seek repose, or court the charms of simplicity for a moment. During the fitful fever of his brief grasp of power, he never threw off the public man and the sovereign; he never sought the shade, or cast upon another the cares and toils of his awful pre-eminence. None possessed more than a momentary influence over him. But the fashion of keeping freedmen always in attendance on the Roman noble had become, from the prevailing indolence of the age, by this time general; and Caius had many such about his court, though he deigned to make little use of them. When, therefore, a prince succeeded to whom ministers and confidants were a necessity, the institution was ready to his hands. The various services—partly official, partly menial—which monarchs in modern times have been allowed by the spirit of feudalism to exact from their noble vassals, were discharged for Claudius by these Grecian adventurers.'[1]

Not Claudius only, but Messalina also, required the assistance of these men of foreign origin, and took them into her confidence. She took no

[1] Merivale, vi. 141, 142.

interest in the affairs of the State; but she was, if we may trust the Roman historians, a woman of extravagant habits and of an inflammable heart. She had never loved her old and somewhat ridiculous husband; young, beautiful, passionate, she formed sudden and vehement attachments, and she required the favour of the freedmen to assist her in her love affairs, and to conceal them from her husband. She had to buy their help and their silence.

Thus the palace was filled with men of this class, ready to meet Messalina's wishes, and to amuse Claudius with buffoonery, to throw dice with him, to engross him in some antiquarian pursuit, and to humour his most fantastic schemes. In return for these services, these Greek adventurers made themselves indispensable. They played on the emperor's fears for his life, to wring out of him complete submission to their direction, and on those of the empress lest they should betray her misconduct, so as to obtain her connivance at their methods of amassing fortunes. Among the freedmen, the first place was taken by Pallas. He had been in the service of Antonia for many years, and had been the most trusty person she could find to commission with the letter to Tiberius that led to the fall of Sejanus. Claudius appointed him to be steward of the finances, with such unlimited powers that his accounts were subjected to no auditor, and he was not required to answer for anything he did with the money that passed through his hands. It is, therefore, not surprising to hear that he amassed an enormous fortune, possessed a splendid garden on the Esquiline Hill, and a magnificent villa at Sabinum. Next to him, but superior to him in ability and energy of character, stood Narcissus, the secretary of the emperor, girded with a dagger as token of his office, a man who amassed prodigious wealth, and had a fancy for keeping white dogs. A third was Callistus, put up for auction by his first master as a slave 'good at provoking a laugh;' he attained to great riches and power under Caligula, and was shrewd enough to then cultivate the favour of Claudius, and pretend to him that his interposition alone had saved his life. Claudius, never forgetful of a kindness, and believing that this was as represented, appointed him as the intermediary through whose hands all petitions passed to him. He was a man loving splendour; his banqueting hall was supported on thirty onyx columns. But he was likewise a patron of literature, and to him the physician Scribonius Largus dedicated a medical work.

Then came Polybius, the assistant of Claudius in his studies, the translator of Homer into Latin and of Virgil into Greek; an historian, held by his lord in such esteem that both consuls deemed it well to walk at his side when he appeared in public; a man whose favour and intercession Seneca sought, when in exile, by a flattering letter of consolation. Another was Harpocrates, whom Claudius permitted to be borne in a litter through the city and to give public shows. Another,

again, was Posides, an eunuch, to whom, at the British triumph of Claudius, the same honours were granted as were usually accorded to well-tried soldiers. Lastly, we may mention Felix, known to us by mention in the Acts of the Apostles, who not only received command over the foot-soldiers and horse-soldiers and the governorship of Judaea, but had in marriage three princesses, one of whom was a grandchild of Antony and Cleopatra and a near kinswoman of Claudius himself, another was the sister of the king Agrippa. Yet this man was the brother of Pallas, first slave and then freedman.

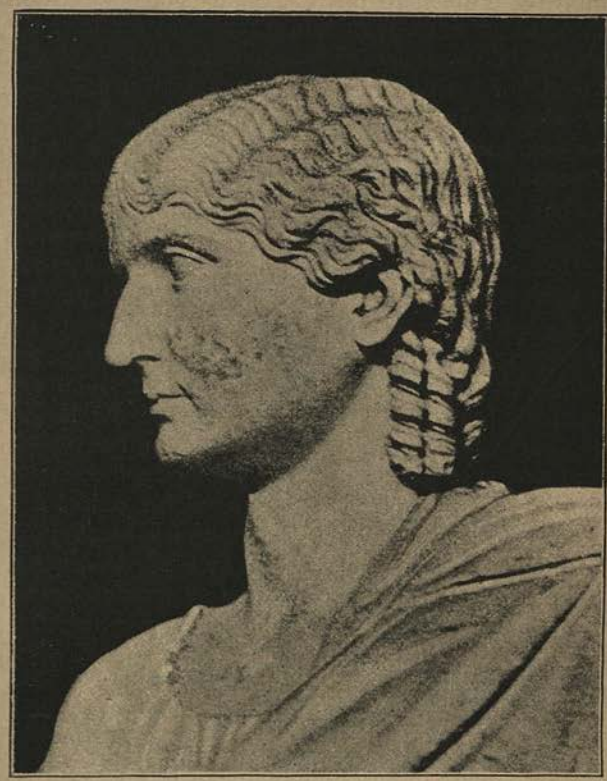


FIG. 93.—AGRIPPINA MINOR. Head of the Statue in the Glyptothek, Munich.

Each of these favourites had his own circle of hangers-on, and many a man left no stone unturned to force his way into the ring. What wealth these men accumulated may be imagined from the saying that went about among the people when Claudius complained of the exhaustion of the imperial treasury, that if he would go third in sharing with Narcissus and Pallas in their plunder, he would fill his treasury to overflow; and of the sumptuousness of their living one can get some

notion from what is said by Pliny of the slave Rotundus, who had passed from the household of Drusilla into that of Claudius, and who had been by him appointed to a position of financial trust in further Spain. The attendants on this man employed silver basins weighing each 250 lbs., and Rotundus himself one of double that weight, for the construction of which a separate workshop had been erected.

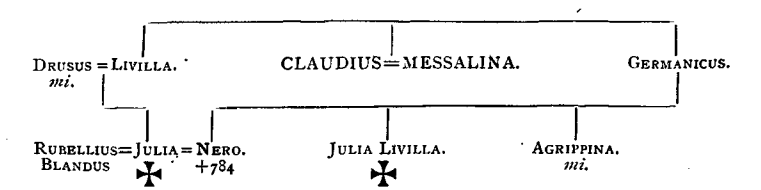
The influence of Messalina and the freedmen gradually advanced, but it was observable from the first. The two sisters of Caius, Agrippina and Julia Livilla, had been recalled from banishment by Claudius, and their property restored to them. As daughters of Germanicus, and therefore nieces of the emperor, as great-grandchildren of Augustus, as sisters of the last emperor, it was inevitable that they should form a centre around whom the dissatisfied would gather.

Agrippina was twenty-five, and in the full bloom of her womanly beauty. It had been with disgust and anger that she had submitted to the name of Claudius being given to her son, Lucius Domitius Nero, in mockery by her brother Caius, and with intent to offend her.

But that which had been done in mockery she now hailed as a stroke of good fortune; and the fact that her son bore the same name as the reigning prince encouraged her to hope that her good-natured uncle would favour and advance the boy. She stood well with Claudius; so also did her sister Julia, two years her junior, the wife of M. Vinicius. Julia was proud, beautiful, and perhaps lax in morals. She set herself so determinedly to gain the favour of her uncle, and to cross the influence of Messalina, that the latter was alarmed; and the pride of Julia, who refused to show the smallest token of deference or even courtesy to the empress, roused in Messalina a demon of exasperation that could be satisfied only with her destruction.

Messalina brought to the ear of Claudius charges against the moral conduct of Julia; and the easily governed old man, without so much as inquiring into the truth or falsehood of the charges, without even suffering his niece to defend herself, sentenced her to banishment; and soon after, at the command of Messalina, the young and beautiful woman was starved to death.

Agrippina was more cautious. She carefully avoided giving Messalina occasion to suspect that she was undermining her position; she never for a moment disguised from herself the peril in which she stood, and



how inevitable would be her destruction at the hands of the empress if she gave her the smallest suspicion that she was attempting to gain influence over the emperor.

If the fate of her sister, hurried away from Rome and put to death within a year of her recall, was a warning to Agrippina, that of her kinswoman Julia, the widow of her brother Nero, and grandchild of Tiberius, subsequently married to Rubellius Blandus, which followed within a twelvemonth, served to emphasise the warning. Julia, by her indiscreet repetition to her mother of the talk of Nero, had led to the arrest, imprisonment, and death of her first husband. Tiberius had then married her to a man outside the sacred family; but Julia was ill disposed to sink her ambition, and she had dared to approach her uncle and exert on him her flattery and caresses. Messalina was alarmed. Any woman who had access to Claudius might drop into his ears tales of her own conduct, and she hastened to forestall Julia by poisoning the mind of her husband against Julia, in precisely the same manner as she had found so successful with his niece, Julia Livilla. Claudius acted also in the same manner to one as to the other Julia. Afraid of having scandalous stories relative to the imperial family bruited about in Rome, he banished Julia, unheard, without investigation into the charges brought against her; and Messalina sent secret orders that she should be despatched in her exile by the sword of a centurion. In the case of neither Julia are we justified in condemning the accused unheard. It is quite as likely that both were innocent as that they were guilty. When Agrippina had lost her sister and her cousin, both sacrificed to the fears and jealousies of Messalina, she knew that her own life and that of her child were menaced, and that her only salvation lay in prudence and circumspection. She had sufficient knowledge of mankind to be sure that one so young, so reckless, so remorseless as Messalina must make herself many enemies and leave some side exposed, if but for a moment, when she would be able to deal her the blow that would release herself and child from hourly danger. It is, indeed, doubtful whether Agrippina would not have shared the fate of the two Julias, in spite of her caution, had not the attention of the young empress been otherwise engaged.

In her danger and isolation Agrippina cast about for a new husband, rich and powerful enough to protect her. And the man on whom her choice fell was Servius Sulpicius Galba. He was already in his forty-sixth year, but this difference in their ages was not a disadvantage in the eyes of a woman, trembling for her life, and above all for the future of her son. Galba belonged by his father's and mother's side to the noblest families of Rome. He was connected with the late empress Livia in a roundabout fashion. His father, after the decease of his mother, had married a lady who was related to the empress, and his stepmother adopted him; whereupon he changed his name to Lucius

Livius Ocella, a name which he bore at the time we are now considering, but which he abandoned on the death of Nero, and his own accession to the vacant throne. He had gained the favour of the empress Livia, through whose influence he obtained the consulship, and on her death Galba received a handsome legacy from her.

He was married to an Aemilia Lepida, who had borne him two sons, but she was probably in failing health. At all events she died soon after, and Agrippina, in her impatience to secure an adequate protector,

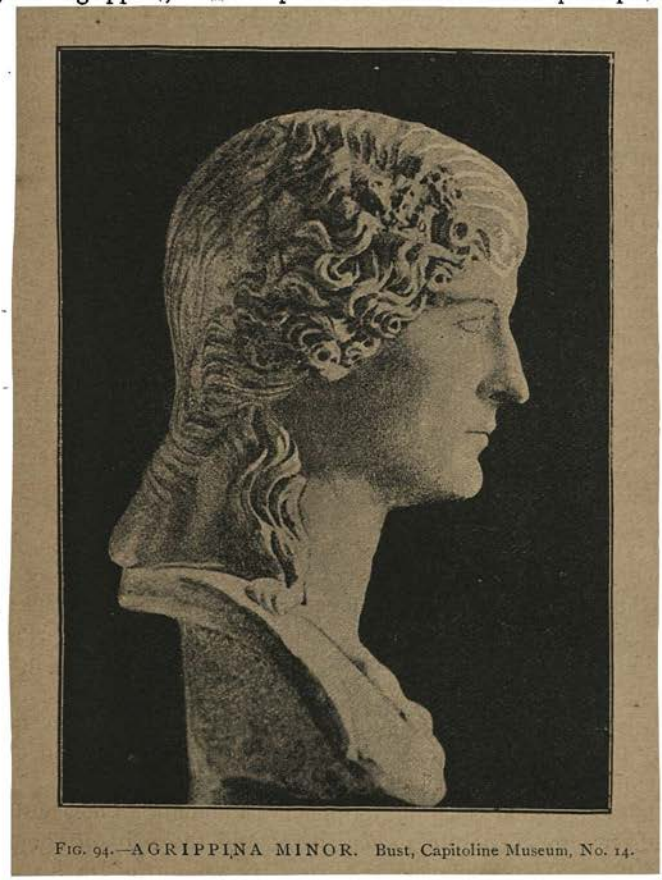


FIG. 94.—AGRIPPINA MINOR. Bust, Capitoline Museum, No. 14.

disregarded the claims of the wife. Marriages in Rome were easily dissolved, and even if death did not sweep Lepida from the side of Galba, he might put her away for the sake of an imperial princess. But the plans of Agrippina were resented by the mother of Lepida, and by others of the family, and a scene occurred in an assembly of ladies. The mother of Lepida publicly proclaimed the designs of Agrippina, and in a quarrel that ensued boxed her ears.

Lepida died, and then Agrippina hoped to have secured Galba, but he refused her proffered hand and the risk that went with it, under the pretext that he had resolved not to marry again. He knew well enough that to take Agrippina was to attract the attention and incur the animosity of the all-powerful Messalina.

Disappointed of her hope, Agrippina was obliged to look to a man of less importance, and she chose the orator Crispus Passienus, a member of a respectable though not an ancient family, wealthy, and connected by marriage with families of more repute and higher antiquity. What victories Passienus had won were forensic, he had not served in the army, and therefore was not likely to awaken suspicions, as would have been the case with Galba.

Passienus had wit and considerable knowledge of mankind. Some of his sayings have been preserved, as one on Caligula, that 'no man made a better slave or a worse master;' and his definition of flattery as a lover against whom one closes, but does not lock, the door, and one is not greatly offended if, notwithstanding, the excluded one pushes in.

He could say sharp things, and some on the artificiality of the oratory of Julius Africanus, and on the avarice of the Domitian family were treasured.

Some of his speeches were read in the days of Quintilian, and his statue adorned the Basilica Julia. He had been married to Domitia, sister of Agrippina's first husband, Domitius Ahenobarbus; and when his wife brought an action against her brother for some money left her in a will of which she conceived herself to be defrauded, Passienus endeavoured to compromise the matter. He made on the occasion a celebrated speech that did credit to his heart and his common sense. He represented to the contesting parties that they belonged to a family of splendid antecedents, that they were bound to each other by the ties of blood, that neither was without every advantage that could be afforded by fortune, and he concluded with the words: 'And then —after all said—that about which you are striving is precisely that which neither of you needs at all.' But Domitia wanted every denarius that was her due. She was grasping to meanness, though herself rich, and her husband supremely so. Junius Bassus said

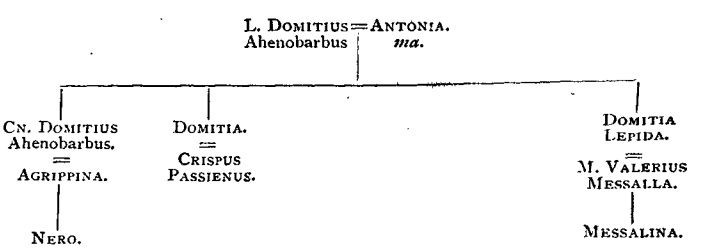


FIG. 95.—AGRIPPINA MINOR. Bust in the Capitoline Museum.

of her that she sold her old shoes. When taxed with having said this, 'No, by Hercules,' he answered, 'I said—not that, but that she only bought second-hand shoes.'

Such a wife as this was unsuitable to Crispus Passienus, and as Agrippina knew that he was about to divorce her, she offered him her hand. He accepted it, and Domitia was divorced. Domitia remained the mortal enemy of Agrippina, and survived her rival, but only for a short while, as Nero poisoned the avaricious old lady, his aunt, to obtain her enormous fortune.

The union of Agrippina with Passienus, who was much older than herself, lasted several years; in the fourth year of Claudius he was made consul, but died probably soon after, and left his vast fortune to his widow and her son, Nero. He seems to have been an amiable as well as a witty man, and Pliny mentions a particular, relative to him, that shows him to have been a lover of nature. Near Tusculum, on a hill, stood a remarkably fine beech, under which the old orator was wont to repose on a hot day and sip his wine; and, grateful to the tree for its pleasant shade, the kindly old fellow would put his arms about the trunk and kiss it before departing into the full glare of the summer sun.

V.—DETERIORATION.

At first Claudius, in his desire to limit expenditure when the treasury was empty, had allowed the various festivals of the year to pass without any shows to amuse the people. Even his own birth-day, January 24th, had gone without notice; but when the populace showed signs of impatience, he deemed it expedient, or was advised that it was expedient, to humour the Plebs Romana with the usual sports. Accordingly he invited them, not long after his birth-day, to an unceremonious and hastily got up meal in the circus, attended with games and exhibitions of various sorts, but all without much display, and lasting but a few days. This he called his 'sportula' or picnic basket. It was, however, noticed that Claudius seemed mightily to enjoy the novelty of entertaining the people, receiving their cheers, and mixing with his guests on a familiar footing. He counted out with his own hands the gold pieces which he gave to the winners in the games, addressed the people as 'Sirs!' cut insipid jokes with them, and was delighted that, however far-fetched they might be, they elicited laughter and applause. One of these is preserved. There was a gladiator named Palumbes (a wood-dove), and when the people called out for their favourite, repeating his name vociferously, Claudius shouted in reply, 'Catch your pigeon first, and then you shall have him!' which naturally provoked much merriment.

A.U.C. 795.
A.D. 42.
Aet. 51.

On one occasion a gladiator having been defeated, his four sons ran forward and bent the knee, supplicating Claudius to spare their father's

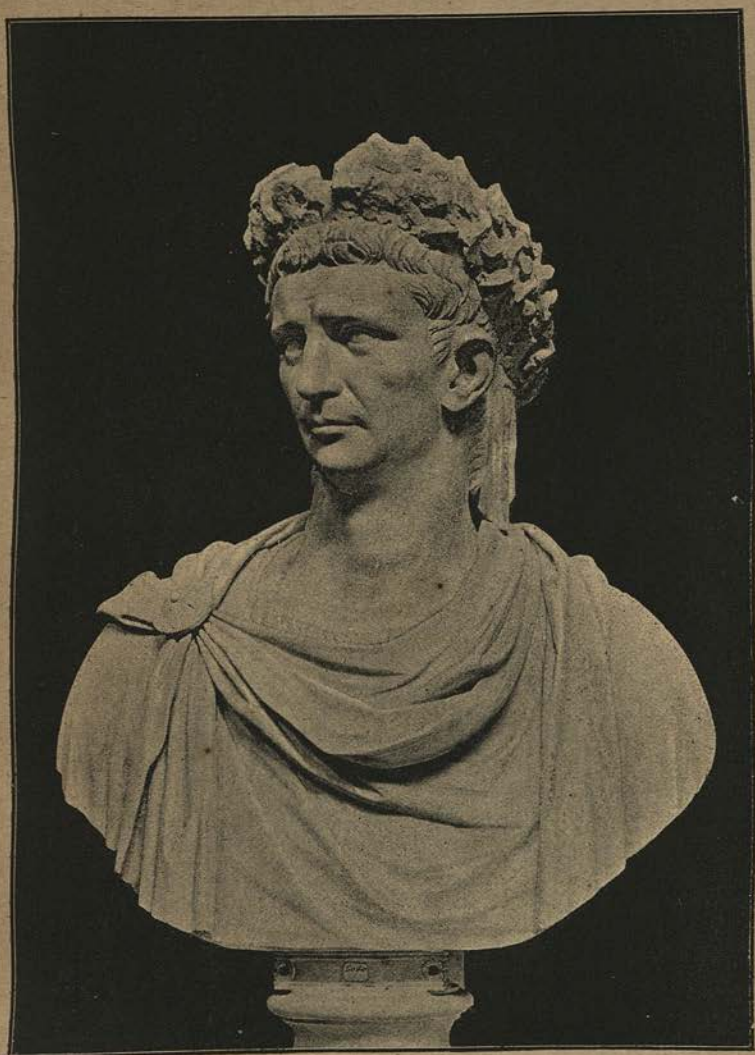


FIG. 96.—CLAUDIUS. Bust from the Farnese Collection, Mus. Nation. Naples.

life. This he did readily, and immediately scribbled in his diptychs, 'See what an advantage it is to have children. You have here an example how useful they may be in procuring favour and security even to a gladiator!' and passed this round the amphitheatre for all the spectators to read.

Unhappily success having attended this beginning of entertaining the people, the stupid old man was so vastly pleased, that he resolved to give more such exhibitions, and gladiatorial fights became common. Claudius was specially incensed against those slaves and freedmen who in the last reign had ruined their masters and obtained the spoliation of their goods and their execution. All such as were known to have thus acted were arrested and condemned to the beasts, and thus for some time the execution of criminals deserving their fate served the purpose of amusing the people, who loved nothing better than much bloodshed.

But not only was Claudius pampering a depraved appetite in the people, but he was blunting his own sense of pity. Some glimmering consciousness that this wholesale butchery was repugnant to good-feeling, and would have annoyed Augustus, did creep into his dull mind, and he ordered the statues of this emperor to be veiled, and then to be removed entirely from a place where so much blood flowed. This was almost certainly due to reminiscences of words that had fallen from the lips of the great founder of the empire, expressive of loathing at these butcheries.[1] Tiberius, as we have seen, declined to witness them, so distasteful were they to him personally, and he also may have been influenced by the same expression of opinion by Augustus that actuated Claudius in veiling and removing the statues. The taste for such spectacles grew with Claudius, and soon the usual number of games did not suffice, so that he added fresh ones on one excuse or another. He was always first in his seat, and he did not leave it at midday when the usual pause took place for refreshment. During that time, when the audience had dispersed, he had beasts or men brought in for bloody interludes.

With singular bad taste, one day when two gladiators simultaneously ran each other through, he ordered their swords to be brought him and turned into knives for his table.

Soon ingenuity was set to work to vary the scenes. At one time a single man was set to fight an elephant; at another a lion was exhibited eating a man; then came races; artificial forests were set up in which wild beasts were hunted—much as we see it in the mosaic floor now in the Villa Borghese—or there was a sea-fight, or on another occasion the storming and sacking of a town.

1 We know from Suetonius (Nero. 4), that Augustus remonstrated privately with Domitius for exhibiting cruel fights of gladiators, and when Domitius disregarded this private monition he restrained him by public edict.

Whilst these exhibitions filled the rabble with enthusiasm for an emperor so gracious and so ready to amuse them at the public cost, the wiser and better men in Rome were saddened at the deterioration in the character of a really well-meaning and kind-hearted ruler. Messalina and the freedmen stimulated him to pursue this course, which distracted his mind from their proceedings, and which, by blunting his moral sense, placed him more completely in their hands to serve as a tool for the destruction of those who were their personal enemies, or whose fortunes they coveted.

He had never recovered the terror of the night of the murder of Caius, and was always easily alarmed for himself; it was, therefore, sufficient for those who were about him to suggest that he was endangered to obtain from him an order for the removal of those who were said to threaten his life. Accustomed daily in the arena to see blood shed, the sense of the sacredness of human life was lost, and he was known to sign a warrant for the execution of certain persons, and then to wonder at their not appearing at his table to dine with him, and to send for them. Consequently it was to the interest of those who obtained death-warrants from him to have them executed with promptitude.

The first sacrifice of this kind was that of Appius Junius Silanus, the step-father of Messalina, and father of the youth whom Claudius had designed to be the husband of Octavia, his daughter by Messalina. The reason why Messalina had resolved on his destruction was never known, and that given by Suetonius is mere conjecture. In some way or other he had incurred her resentment, and with the aid of the freedman Narcissus she compassed his destruction.

To work up the mind of Claudius to the requisite condition of nervous apprehension, it was announced that a man had been discovered near the imperial bed-chamber wearing a dagger. A morning or two after this Narcissus rushed into the presence of his master, and, prostrating himself before him, told him that he had dreamed that he, Claudius, had fallen by the hand of Appius. Messalina seconded the attempt of Narcissus to frighten the weak old man by saying that she also had been disturbed during the night by precisely the same dream. In the meantime a messenger had been sent to Appius to summon him to the imperial bed-chamber, and he entered when the emperor was bewildered and quaking with the imaginary terrors infused into him by the designing freedman and the empress. Claudius at once, without consideration, gave orders for the execution of the accused; and so convinced was he of the guilt of the victim, that next day he related all the circumstances to the senate, and publicly thanked Narcissus for having his interests so at heart that he watched over them even in his sleep.

This act of violence had more far-reaching consequences than

Messalina and her assistants expected. At the accession of Claudius, Rome was in a condition of feverish excitement, and although the agitation of spirits had been allayed by the prudence and moderation with which the new prince had initiated his rule, yet a substratum of suspicion had remained; the feebleness of his mental and moral nature was fully appreciated, and it was known that the character of the government would depend on the sort of persons who gained influence over the mind of the ruler. For a while it was hoped that Claudius was in the hands of men of judgment and virtue, and of this the measures adopted by him seemed an assurance. But Messalina and the freedmen held too compactly together about the throne for the voices of the wise and just to reach the prince, and they set to work to destroy or drive away every one who attempted, in any way, to disturb them in their absolute control of the springs of power. Some of the best men were put to death or sent into banishment, others withdrew voluntarily from an unequal contest.

Among these banished was L. Annaeus Seneca, who had been accused by Messalina of criminal association with the unfortunate Julia Livilla, sister of Agrippina; but we are perhaps justified in suspecting that the real cause of his removal was that his upright mind and clear sense of the duties of government obtained recognition from Claudius, and that the prince was inclined to follow his advice.

The exile of a man of such worth had alarmed the first men in the state, and produced very general dissatisfaction among them; and now the precipitate execution, on the most frivolous grounds, of a man closely allied to the imperial household, showed them that the emperor was completely withdrawn from the guidance of men of repute, and was fallen helpless under the control of a parcel of servants and a dissolute wife. The prospect was one to alarm all.

About this time, when spirits were thus disturbed, there arrived a letter from Seneca to his mother, Helvia, intended for publication, and rapidly circulated in Rome. The object—the avowed object—of this letter was to show that a true stoic philosopher carried in himself the source of consolation, whatever might befall him. If banished, he conveyed his virtues with him, and they sustained him in the midst of adversity. But there were significant references to the martyrs of Caesarean tyranny, to M. Marcellus, to M. Cato, and to Brutus, the murderer of Caesar.

Several members of the senate were uneasy as to their safety, having taken a prominent part against Claudius, either for the Republic or for themselves, in the January days of the former year; and these men were determined to make an attempt to free the state from the bondage into which it had fallen, and which was degrading enough under the mad youth Caius, but was more degrading still when its taskmasters and drivers were emancipated slaves and a wanton girl. Among these

men was M. Annius Vinicianus, who had been a pretender to the throne on the fall of Caius, and who, as nephew to the murdered Julia Livilla, expected to be the next victim. His plans fell in with those of M. Furius Camillus Scribonianus, who stood at the head of the Dalmatian legion. Italy, cleared of troops, lay defenceless before this general; the dissatisfaction with the new prince was spreading, and the incapacity of the emperor to resist a military invasion was obvious. These considerations had awoke in Scribonianus the thought to dethrone Claudius and assume his place. He speedily came to an understanding with M. Vinicianus, who was to act for him in Rome. He drew his forces together, received their oath of allegiance, and sent the emperor a letter full of reproaches and threats, demanding his resignation, and assuring him personal safety in the event of his offering no armed resistance. The effect of this letter on Claudius answered all the expectations of Scribonianus. Conscious of his weakness, paralysed with terror, he called together the first men of the state and consulted with them as to the form of resignation of the throne. Senators and knights left the city in troops to join the general in his camp, among them the consul of the former year, Pomponius, against whom P. Suillius, the devoted tool of Messalina, had brought charges, menacing his life. The bulk of the people looked on and waited, in supreme indifference as to the result.

But tidings of a different complexion reached Rome five days later. The soldiers of Scribonianus had reconsidered the proclamation of their leader, were by no means worked to enthusiasm for his cause by the promises of political liberty, and they had no grievances of which to complain under the rule of Claudius that would induce them to take up arms. When the standards, frozen into the ground, resisted the attempt to raise them, and wreaths thrown about the eagles slipped off, the soldiers regarded these as warnings from the gods that their revolt was not favoured by heaven; taking alarm, they turned against their general and his lieutenants who had endeavoured to involve them in rebellion. They fell on and murdered their officers. Scribonianus, indeed, effected his escape to the island of Issa, but was pursued and either threw himself on his own sword, or was run through by one of his soldiers, whilst in the arms of his wife.

The legions that had behaved with such unexpected fidelity were loaded with favours by the Caesar. The seventh and eleventh received the honourable titles of Claudian, Pious, Faithful. The soldier who claimed to have dealt the death-blow to the rebel general was promoted to high honours, as were also those who professed to have hacked to death their traitorous officers.

The collapse of the insurrection was complete. Those most compromised laid violent hands on themselves, or were sentenced by Claudius to death, but with a preservation of the outward form of

legality; for the trial of the conspirators took place before the senate, in the presence of Claudius; though the officers of the guard, and the all-powerful freedmen were also called in. The emperor, seated between the two consuls on the curule chair, demanded of the conscript fathers the punishment of the accused who were brought into their midst, and then, taking his place among the senators on his usual bench, saw that his demand was complied with. In his terror he forgot the regulations he had made against the reception of testimony from slaves; he now invited denunciations from every quarter. He forgot also his solemn undertaking never to employ the rack against free-born Romans. Citizens, knights, and senators were tortured; men and women thrown into prison, and their bodies were soon after cast down the Gemonian stairs. Those who had taken to flight were pursued, their heads cut off and exposed in the forum.

It need hardly be said that the hands of Messalina and the freedmen were at work in stirring the nervous terrors of the prince to frenzy, and in obtaining thereby the removal of every one against whom they bore a grudge or entertained mistrust. They brought accusations against a host of wealthy persons, and took heavy bribes to let these accusations fall. The consequence was that the public executions lost all their moral significance, and the mockery of the people broke out amidst the ghastly scenes of blood. When Claudius addressed the senate with a quotation from the Odyssey, which he had already used when addressing the soldiers—

'Repel the foe when he first rancour shows,'

the preceding verse was whispered from one to another in the assembly—

'But I am young, and trust not yet my bands,'

the fathers in bitter irony representing the emperor in the execution of judgment as a quaking youth.

Even during the course of the trials a gleam of mirth flashed through the gloom. When the all-powerful Narcissus in court taunted a freedman of Scribonianus with 'What would you have done, Galeosus, had your master become sovereign?' he received the curt reply, 'I would have stood behind his chair and held my tongue.'

But even in the midst of these executions, provoked by his terrors, the kindly nature of Claudius did not quite forsake him. Contrary to custom, he remitted the penalties that affected the children of those condemned to death, and refused to allow the confiscation of their goods. The name of Scribonianus was erased from the consular fasti, and his widow was obliged to leave Rome; but his son retained his father's property, and succeeded to his place in the college of the Arval brothers.

On the 1st January A.D. 43 Lucius Vitellius entered on a consul-

ship he was to hold for six months. His colleague whose name we do not know died shortly after his appointment, and Claudius stepped into his place as consul suffect—the third time he held the consulship.[1] He still held the office when he resolved on his British campaign. A.U.C. 796. A.D. 43. Aet. 52.

The important position taken by L. Vitellus justifies at this point a short account of him and his family. The Vitellii originated at Nuceria in Apulia, and laid claims to great antiquity and importance. But some said these claims were more imaginary than real, and they related that the ancestor of the family was a cobbler whose son had married the daughter of a baker, and that they had raised themselves into importance and wealth by denunciations, and by buying up the estates of those who fell under their accusations, so that a son of the Vitellius who married the baker's daughter was raised to the rank of a knight. This man, Publius Vitellius, was a financial agent under Augustus, and left four sons, Aulus, Quintus, Publius, and Lucius, all of whom became senators. Of these, Aulus was famed for his love of splendour and the good table he kept; he died while consul suffect A.D. 32. Quintus was quaestor under Augustus, but was forced to leave the senate in A.D. 18. Publius had been the companion of Germanicus on the Rhine, had accompanied him to the east, and had prosecuted Cn. Piso on the accusation of having poisoned Germanicus; in reward he received the priestly office from the senate at the recommendation of Tiberius. After having been invested with the Praetorship, he was made governor of Bithynia, where he struck medals in honour of his former general and friend, Germanicus. He was accused in A.D. 31 of being involved in the conspiracy of Sejanus, but was committed to the charge of his brother, probably Aulus, and opened his veins. They were bound up again, but he never thoroughly recovered the loss of blood, and died shortly after.

Lucius Vitellius, the youngest of the four brothers, was married about the time that Tiberius came to the throne to Sextilia, a lady of noble family and of nobler character. In A.D. 34 he was consul, and next year governor of Syria, where he had shown great ability and judgment under difficult circumstances. He was, however, recalled by Caius in A.D. 40, who meditated putting him to death, but he was saved by his base adulation. With veiled head he approached the tyrant, at every moment turning his face aside, as though unable to endure the dazzling glory of his majesty; he flung himself at the feet of Caius and adored him as God, and entreated him, in the event of his being favoured with life, to be allowed to do sacrifice to his divinity. This gross flattery not only saved his life, but raised him into favour. The emperor numbered him among his friends, and L. Vitellius was careful by persistence in flattery to secure himself in this position. On

[1] So an inscription at Tibur.

one occasion when the mad prince was boasting to him of his intimacy with the moon-goddess, with that mixture of malice and craving for admiration which caused him to lay traps for his associates, he suddenly turned on Vitellius and asked if he had seen him on the preceding night in converse with the goddess. The ready flatterer lowered his eyes and answered, 'Sire, it is permitted to divinities only to see each other.'

By such means Vitellius obtained a position of great influence at the court of Caius, and on a change of prince he readily adapted himself to the new situation. Measuring the feebleness of Claudius at once, and rightly judging that he could himself obtain no direct control over him because elbowed into an outer circle, he devoted himself to pay homage to Messalina and the freedmen, Pallas and

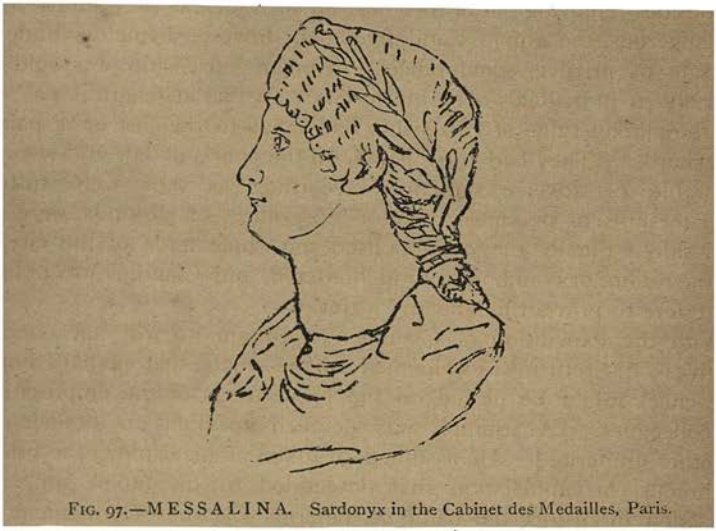


FIG. 97.—MESSALINA. Sardonyx in the Cabinet des Medailles, Paris.

Narcissus. He erected golden images of the latter among his household gods, and stooping to the feet of the empress, requested that as the highest privilege that could be accorded, he might be suffered to wear one of her slippers in his bosom. When this was allowed, he ostentatiously drew it thence at no rare intervals, and kissed it with visible emotion.

This was the man whom Claudius appointed to be consul for the year, and when he resolved on an expedition to Britain he placed the reins of government and command over the troops in his hands.

The absence of Claudius on this expedition lasted somewhat over six months, and during his absence what little remains of restraint had held Messalina from full indulgence in her caprices were cast aside. It was said in Rome that she had as lovers Plautius Lateranus, Suillius Caesoninus, a kinsman of P. Suillius, and above all, Vettius Valens,

imperial physician, the founder of a new medical school, and a man of large fortune. But it must be remembered that most of the scandalous gossip was collected by Agrippina, her personal enemy, and stored in her memoirs, from whence Tacitus and Suetonius derived their narratives of her profligacy, and that Seneca, a man whose banishment she had obtained, and whose writings contain much anecdotal material relative to the period, says not a single word against her moral character. That she swept out of her path by the sword of the executioner all who opposed her, or whose wealth excited her greed, is certain; these matters could not be disguised or denied, but we have no such guarantee for the truthfulness of the painting of her private depravity. The trials and condemnations were recorded in official registers, not the names of the lovers of Messalina, nor her escapades.

Besides removing out of their way all such men as they supposed to be dangerous, the empress and freedmen drove a shameless trade in the sale of privileges and offices. Roman citizenship was sold by them not to individuals only, but to cities, so that at length it was said that the market value of citizenship had fallen to the cost of 'a pair of glass sherds.' They laid their hands on the courts of law and secured favourable or adverse sentences, according as they were bribed. Governorships of provinces, praetorships, offices of all kinds, were put up to sale. Finally they monopolised the whole trade of the city, so that the influx of commodities was hindered, and Claudius was obliged to interfere to prevent famine and a riot.

With the expedition of Claudius to Britain we will not concern ourselves; his return was welcomed by the senate, that perhaps hoped some check might be placed on the proceedings of the empress and her colleagues. A triumph was decreed to him, an honour not altogether unmerited. He assumed in token of his exploits the title of Britannicus, an appellation that descended to his infant son, and superseded in history the name of Tiberius Claudius Germanicus, by which he had been previously known.

The triumph of Claudius was followed by the bestowal of many gracious distinctions, both civil and military, on deserving officers of the state, but also on some whose claims were more than questionable. Among these latter was the empress herself, to whom the fond husband accorded a seat of honour by his side on all public occasions, and permission to employ the carpentum, the state chariot, on great solemnities; and indeed she attended in his triumph seated in the gilded carpentum. A.U.C. 797. A.D. 44. Aet. 53.

The usual games and banquets attended the triumph, and Claudius indulged himself in the pleasure of seeing men fight with beasts and with each other, and also with the pleasures of the table, to which he was equally addicted. His love of good food and good wine was proverbial, and as almost daily his table was spread for six hundred

guests, his excesses became public. It was noted that at his board the banqueters sat instead of adopting the usual recumbent posture; no restraint was exercised, Claudius laughed and talked and drank with all, till his head sank on his bosom and he fell back in his chair.

When one among the guests, T. Vinius, a man of praetorian family, carried off the golden cup out of which he had been drinking at the imperial table, Claudius did not exclude him from his company, but on the next occasion had an earthenware mug set in his place, whereas all the rest at table were furnished with drinking vessels of precious metal.

Apparently during the absence of Claudius in Britain the senate ordered the recall of all the bronze coinage of Caligula, that it might be melted up, in order as far as possible to obliterate the memory of Caius; but as a silver medal was certainly struck on the return of Claudius, bearing his head on one side and that of his predecessor on the other, it would seem that he was not altogether satisfied with what had been done, and that he struck this medal to himself as conqueror of Britain, and to his nephew who had also undertaken an expedition against Britain, as a token that he wished to reconcile the public mind in some measure to that nephew. Moreover, the molten coins were not used for recoinage, but were employed, at the suggestion of Messalina, for a bronze statue to Mnester, the favourite actor whom Messalina had withdrawn from the public stage. Perhaps, at the same time, the marble altar bearing the name of Mnester was erected, which has been found in Rome.

Mnester was vastly popular from his dramatic talents, and the people resented the fact that he was withdrawn from the stage by Messalina, and with loud cries called for him to appear. The emperor, who alone knew nothing of the circumstances, endeavoured to allay the tumult by taking a solemn oath before the assembled populace that he was not holding back the actor from them, and that he did not know where he was—a proceeding that converted their resentment into hilarity at the expense of the prince. Claudius had himself caused the withdrawal of the actor, who had resisted the allurements of Messalina, till she complained to her husband of his churlishness, whereupon Claudius had ordered him to submit to the dictation of the empress; then she had received him among her own retainers in the palace, and he ceased to appear on the stage. That this story, which seems incredible, is, at all events, based on truth, would appear from the subsequent trial and execution of Mnester, when he actually pleaded the command of Claudius as his exculpation for the charges brought against him.

We may pass on from the year A.D. 44 to 47; for in the intermediate years the condition of affairs had not materially altered. The husband of Agrippina, Crispus Passienus, had indeed been appointed consul, and T. Vinicius, the husband of Julia, who had been put to death by

Messalina, had died—it was supposed by poison, administered by order of the empress. Very different statements are made as to the reasons why he incurred her animosity, which, if not absolutely incompatible, show that there was no certain ground for laying the guilt of his death on the already burdened head of Messalina. 'When we find that the overthrow of Vinicius,' says Dean Merivale, 'was effected by no overt act, no public charge and judicial sentence, but was popularly ascribed to the occult agency of poison, administered by the contrivance of the empress, a cloud of distrust must be allowed to rest on the whole story.'

We have now again the advantage of the guidance of Tacitus, for the great chasm in his Annals, that reaches from the accession of Caius to the seventh year of Claudius, is overpassed; and when we again take up his record we meet at once with the misdeeds of Messalina.[1] A.U.C. 800. A.D. 47. Aet. 56.

Valerius Asiaticus had been chosen consul for the second time for the year A.D. 46. He was a native of Vienne, in Gaul, on the Rhone; he had won the friendship of Caius, and had by him been advanced to the consulship. But a gross insult launched by the tyrant at the wife of Asiaticus had so exasperated him that he entered into the plot for his destruction, and after the death of Caligula, he it was who had the boldness to stand up in the forum before the excited populace and frankly express his regret that his own hand had not freed Rome from the monster. Not only so, but he had been one of the candidates for the vacant throne. Since the accession of Claudius he had maintained his independence, without incurring the resentment of the emperor. His brother was one of the confidential friends of Claudius; he himself had the prefecture of the city confided to him, and when, in A.D. 45, the senate showed signs of dissatisfaction with the measures of Claudius in curtailing their privileges, to pacify them Valerius Asiaticus was designated consul for the ensuing year. He, however, voluntarily resigned; not because he dreaded the expense—every consul being expected to provide two races in the circus every month—but because he was afraid of being brought into prominence and so attracting the suspicion and jealousies of those around the prince. The more to secure himself, he retired along with his wife to Crete.

On the last night of the year he moon was eclipsed, and news reached Rome that at the same time the Aegean Sea had boiled around Thera, and that a new island had risen to the surface. These were taken as signs of revolution in the state. The Chaldaean astrologers and the augurs added their prognostications, and the commotion of spirits became general. Not least agitated by the tidings of signs in heaven and earth was the timorous old emperor, and Messalina and the freedmen, at the height of their power, used the nervous fears in which

[1] For A.D. 46 we have not even the help of Dio, and we do not obtain that of Tacitus till the following year.

he was plunged to goad him to fresh violences. Yet a certain sense of degradation in his subjection to these unworthy ministers hung over his spirits, and he made feeble and ineffectual efforts to shake himself free. Nor did the people hesitate to let him understand what was their opinion in the matter. When, one day, in the theatre, an actor declaimed the line—

'Intolerable is it when a false slave stands in luck,'

all eyes were turned upon the favourite freedman Polybius; but he, with cool impudence, rose and exclaimed: 'And yet the same poet says—

"And ill it is to have a ruler who was once a goatherd,"'

a reference to the humiliation of Claudius in his early life, that was at once understood and applauded. Claudius refused to listen to a number of accusations brought before him by his freedmen, and when these involved men of no political importance, he said laughingly, 'We do not proceed against fleas as we do against lions and tigers.'

But with a man of the mental and moral calibre of Claudius, an effort to be free never lasted long, nor was he ever sufficiently resolute to effect a change. He settled back after each struggle into more complete thraldom than before. It was so on every occasion; and in the listlessness that supervened he suffered his advisers to obtain from him the condemnation to death of numerous persons, whose only guilt in many cases consisted in their dislike of the rule of a woman and of emancipated slaves.

Cn. Pompeius, the husband of Antonia, and son-in-law of Claudius, was the first victim. A charge of shameless immorality was brought against him; but the real reason why he was removed was that the daughter of the emperor might be given to Cornelius Faustus Sulla, half-brother of the empress. Both the parents of Pompeius, Crassus Frugi, a man 'so big a fool that he might as well have been a king,' and 'as like Claudius as is one egg to another,' and his wife Scribonia, were put to death.

Then followed charges against Poppaea Sabina and Valerius Asiaticus. The father of Sabina, C. Poppaeus Sabinus, had not sprung from a noble family, but he had been a useful servant of the state under Augustus and Tiberius, and had been advanced to the highest honours. He had been consul in A.D. 9, and after that, for twenty-four years had been governor of Moesia, Macedonia, and Achaia, and in A.D. 26 had received the insignia of a triumph. His daughter, the most beautiful woman of the time, was married to T. Ollius, and had borne him a daughter before the fall of Sejanus, in A.D. 31, when he was involved, and perished. Through the death of her father, Poppaea had acquired his fortune, and she had entered into a new marriage with the senator, L. Cornelius Scipio, and together with him she was a constant guest at the

table of the emperor. Beautiful beyond every other woman, eclipsing Messalina, she had incurred her envy, and when the empress suspected, or fancied that she suspected, that Poppaea cast admiring glances at the actor Mnester, she resolved on her death.

Valerius Asiaticus—though to escape danger he had gone to Crete—could not carry with him his gardens. These occupied the Pincian Hill, and were those that had formerly belonged to Lucullus; but he had spent much on enhancing their beauty, beautiful as they had been before. Messalina resolved on effecting at one stroke the destruction of Poppaea, whose beauty she envied, and of Valerius, whose gardens she coveted. She induced Sosibius, tutor to her boy Britannicus, to express in the ear of Claudius his concern at the influence and ambition of Asiaticus, who had just then come to Baiae from Crete. Sosibius hinted that Asiaticus was at the head of a large dissatisfied party in Rome; that owing to his birth at Vienne, he would be acceptable to the legions drawn from Gaul; that his residence in Crete had been designed for the purpose of engaging the Orientals in a general rising, and that his return to Italy was but the first stage on his journey into Gaul to raise the standard of revolt.

Claudius, without further inquiry, sent Crispinus, praefect of the guards, in all haste to Baiae at the head of a large body of soldiers. Asiaticus was brought in chains to Rome. Then Suillius, the base agent of Messalina, appeared, and brought his charge, not before the senate, but before the emperor in person, in his palace. He declared that Asiaticus had been guilty of fomenting rebellion, of adultery with Poppaea, and of the basest forms of sensuality. Asiaticus remained silent, treating these accusations with lofty disregard, till the last was produced, when the spirit of the Roman noble was roused within him, and he hurled it from him with angry disgust. Then he entered on an energetic and passionate defence, which produced a visible effect on the emperor. Messalina was present, and was wrought to tears; but as she slipped out to conceal her emotion, she whispered to Vitellius, 'Let him not escape.' The fate of Asiaticus trembled in the balance. The emperor was inclined to believe in his innocence, and to dismiss him. Then Vitellius threw himself at his feet. He recalled to his memory the devotion of both Asiaticus and his mother to the sovereign, he pleaded his services during the campaign in Britain, he urged his own intimacy with the accused, and then entreated, as a consequence, that Valerius might be permitted to *choose his own mode of death.*

Claudius, bewildered and incapable of forming an independent resolution, gave his gracious consent. Asiaticus was led away, and prepared himself for death. His friends urged him to the comparatively easy mode of starvation: he declined the suggestion; bathed, seated himself cheerfully at table, and after supper rose and looked at the

funeral pyre in process of construction in his gardens. He pointed out that it was too near a clump of ancient and beautiful trees, that might be injured by the flames, and had the heap of combustibles removed to another spot. Then he opened his veins, and died, saying that he regretted that he had not fallen under the sullen jealousy of Tiberius, or the fury of Caligula, and that he must become the victim of the base devices of a woman, and the craft of a creature as foul as Vitellius.

Messalina lost no time in communicating to Poppaea that her doom was sealed, that orders had been issued for her to be cast into prison; and the unhappy, despairing woman, to escape the shame of the Gemonian stairs, put herself to death.

Of all this Claudius was kept in ignorance, and when, a few days later, at his invitation Scipio appeared at his table as a guest, the emperor inquired why Poppaea, his wife, had not accompanied him. 'I have just lost her,' replied the husband, and seated himself. The case against Poppaea was proceeded with before the senate as though she were alive, and Scipio was asked his verdict in his proper order. 'I think on Poppaea's offence as do the others,' he said, knowing that in the general opinion she was regarded as the victim to the jealousy of the empress.

At the same time two knights of the name of Petra were involved in the accusation. It was pretended that their house had served Poppaea as a place of meeting with Mnester, but little or no evidence on this point was produced; the main charge against the brothers was that one or other of them had dreamed that Claudius had appeared, his head wreathed with bleached vine-leaves, and had explained this dream as portending the death of the emperor at the time of vintage. Both thereupon were sent to execution.

Those engaged in the detection and defeat of the imaginary revolt of Asiaticus before it had broken out were richly rewarded. To Crispinus were decreed the insignia of the praetorship and fifteen hundred thousand sesterces; and to Sosibius ten hundred thousand, on the motion of Vitellius, 'for services rendered to Britannicus by his instructions, and to Claudius by his counsels.'

Suillius continued thenceforth to prosecute his avocation of accuser with unremitting ardour, and he had many imitators. 'The prince, by taking into his own hands the arbitrary dispensation of the laws, and the authority of the magistrates, had opened a wide field for rapine,' says Tacitus. Here we see the difference between these cases of judicial murder and those under Tiberius. Claudius and Caius tried the accused themselves, and themselves pronounced judgment. This Tiberius did only in the case of the murderers of his son Drusus. All the rest who were condemned were so by the regular tribunals and in the ordinary course of law.

The age of Messalina was now twenty-three, and she was at the

FIG. 98.—MESSALINA. Bust in the Uffizi Palace, Florence.

zenith of her power. We may here tarry a while to consider her personal appearance, as we know it from the portraits that remain.

Unhappily the medals do not afford us a satisfactory basis on which to determine her face, for although of these there are several, yet none of them have sufficient individuality about them to distinguish them, and but for the legend they might be taken as representations of the elder Agrippina or of Antonia. But we are better off with the cameos. In the famous Sardonyx of Vienna, bearing two pairs of heads rising out of horns of plenty, those on the left represent Claudius and Messalina, facing them are Tiberius and Livia idealised, and yet in my opinion unmistakeable.

Messalina is here represented with her hair in small curls covered with a species of crown wreathed with corn. This is the usual mark of the deification of an empress as Ceres. The brow is low, the nose straight and a little *rétroussé* at the end, the mouth remarkable for the thinness of the lips; the chin is not prominent, and a peculiar feature is the slope from the chin to the throat, forming a marked contrast in formation to that of Livia opposite. The mouth turns down, but there is a slight contraction in the corner.

Among statues believed to represent Messalina is one in the Louvre, which was found before the Porta S. Lorenzo at Rome near where the gardens of Pallas are supposed to have lain. This statue represents a lady with the *palla* drawn over her head, and she holds a little boy on her left arm. The boy is supposed to be Britannicus. There is, however, nothing in the statue to lead us to conclude that it represents an empress and her son, and the features of the lady have not the slightest resemblance to that in the Vienna sardonyx.

There is a bust in the Villa Albani that is supposed to be Messalina, but though a fine bust, it is without individuality and has no resemblance to the cameo head. It is quite another matter with the bust in the Uffizi palace, Florence. The profile there has a remarkable likeness to the type-giving face on the cameo. The hair is in curls, but hangs down in plaits behind, the brow is low, the eyes full, and the mouth with its thin lips and cruel expression seems thoroughly to express the character of the woman as known to us by history. The head is flat, without any of the imaginative faculties developed, and the forehead is also flat. There is insolence in the mouth, and a curl in the corner, noticeable also in the gem. One eye is larger than the other. They are not in line. The nose has been restored, so that we cannot compare it with that on the cameo. The rest agrees perfectly, though the slope from the chin is not so perceptible in the bust owing to the difference in position of the head. The brows are straight, not arched. Not only are the eyes of different shapes, but the chin is on one side. The end of the chin is square, the mouth is small, the lips fuller on the left side than on the right, and the right corner

drawn up. The expression of the face is different when seen from each side, owing to the singular lack of uniformity in the sides of the face. In the same gallery is a so-called young Britannicus, and the resemblance of this child as far as the formation of the lower part of the face goes to the Messalina above described is remarkable. Still more remarkable is that of the beautiful statue in the Lateran, where the resemblance is very close. The boy's lips are fuller, but the whole structure of the jaws and chin, and the curl of the lower lip, are the same as in the Messalina of Florence. If this be Britannicus then the bust at Florence is that of his mother; and it is hard to say who else can be intended by this charming statue in military costume.

A medical man of large experience, who at my request studied the bust of Messalina in the Florence gallery, informs me that it is that of a woman physically unsound, the flattening of the top of the head indicates an imperfect mental development, and the general aspect of the face, evidently a close study from life without any attempt at hiding blemishes and idealising, is that of a woman whose span of life would naturally be short. There would probably be malformation of the chest. The face is that of one with feverish blood, whose flame of life burnt too fast. The face is not in itself sensual, not at all animal, but it is insolent and cruel. The low flat brow as well as the low flat head show that she was deficient in all the higher and nobler qualities. In this bust the formation of the throat is peculiar. M. Mayor remarks, 'Thin lips, evil smile, ears hardly visible, jaw advancing, remarkably massive, eyes close together, profoundly sunk under their arcade, nostrils fine, flexible, nose pointed (restored), lips asymmetrical, the upper lip lifted on the right, as in a beast preparing to bite, the same characteristic feature observed in Caligula and commented on by Darwin. Facial asymmetry. The left eye highest and furthest from the nose (the same noticeable in Nero and Claudius, etc.). The look cruel rather than voluptuous. *Ignis intus urit.* An ironical smile, the by no means uncommon mask worn by pathological corruption and nymphomania. Elaborate coiffure; the hair curled with affectation. Brow low.'

The bust given in the catalogue as Messalina in the Capitoline Museum is that of a *bonne mère* of over forty. As Messalina died at the age of twenty-four, it cannot possibly represent her.

There is a bust in the Torlonia gallery thought to represent her, but not only is it very inferior as a work of art, but it has also been much restored, the entire nose being new. The dressing of the hair is the same as the Florentine bust, and there are the same flatness of the top of the head, and hardness of the mouth with its cruel smirk. But it is apparently the head of a woman of over thirty, and the face is much longer. This may represent her mother; if it were intended for Messalina, she must have prematurely oldened. Moreover, there is not

the aspect of fragility in the Torlonia head that there is in that at Florence, nor is there the frank fidelity to nature in representing all the natural crookedness of the real face.

VI.—THE END OF MESSALINA.

THE 21st April was the centenary festival of the foundation of Rome. The city had completed, according to the ordinary computation, eight centuries of fame and of growing importance and splendour, and although Augustus, following a pontifical tradition which antedated the foundation of the city by sixty-three years, had celebrated the secular games for the sixth time of their observance, yet Claudius seized the occasion of the 21st April being the eight hundredth anniversary according to popular reckoning, to perform them with extraordinary splendour, and he combined therewith a triumph accorded to Aulus Plautius, the able officer who had subjugated Britain. Claudius exhibited no unworthy jealousy of the lieutenant; after investing him with the triumphal ornaments, the laurel crown and the *tunica palmata* and the embroidered toga, while Plautius rode on horseback through the forum to the Capitol the emperor walked on the left side of his horse.

A.U.C. 800.
A.D. 47.
Aet. 56.

To summon the people to the festival, heralds were sent round the town loudly proclaiming that no such a chance would ever again present itself to the mortal men of Rome, and when L. Vitellius saluted the emperor with the invocation, 'May you often repeat these celebrations!' the adulation of the flatterer provoked the laughter of the people.

A few particulars relative to these secular games—jubilee, we should now call this sort of thing—have been preserved. In the races a chariot of the white faction won, drawn by a horse named the 'Crow,' although the charioteer was flung to the ground in the arena. Also a dancer appeared on the stage, who had performed at the secular games given by Augustus sixty-three years previously. In the amphitheatre African beasts, panthers, lions, leopards, and tigers were hunted by a squadron of the body-guard under their officers. There were also bull-fights. Thessalian toreadors tormented and assailed the bulls till their strength was spent. Then they leaped on their backs, and seizing them by the horns flung the beasts down on the sand. A gladiator dressed as a shepherd, armed only with his pastoral crook and mantle, contended with a lion, and as the beast leaped upon him, he dexterously twisted the cloak round the head of the lion, cast him to the ground and knelt on his neck. A giant from Arabia, nine feet nine inches high, was exhibited, as well as a chariot drawn by four tame tigers.

But what to the two rival women, Agrippina and Messalina, was of

greatest interest was the appearance of their respective sons in the Trojan game. Britannicus was but six, and Nero was nine. They were dressed in military harness, richly gilt, and took part in a cavalcade among other noble youths, and then in a sham fight representing the conflict between the Greeks and the inhabitants of Ilium. The spectators, regardless of the danger to which they exposed the child and his mother by their factious applause, exhibited their enthusiasm for Agrippina and the grandson of Germanicus, and received the appearance in the circus of the young son of the prince with chilling indifference.

This token of popular preference would have angered Messalina and provoked her to destroy both her rival and the child, had it not been that her shallow mind was at that time fully engaged with a new amour. The object of her passion was C. Silius, on whom she heaped presents, honours, and lavished promises.

The story of the intrigue of Messalina with C. Silius that led to her death is most obscure. As given by Tacitus it is incredible, as he himself was aware, for he says, 'I am conscious that what I relate will appear fabulous, that such recklessness should have existed, but I do not dress up my narrative for producing an effect, rather I always have related and always will relate what has been stated to me, or what I have found recorded by my predecessors.' A.U.C. 801. A.D. 48. Aet. 57.

The facts were, no doubt, as Tacitus relates them, but the key to explain them was not in his hands. His account is as follows: 'Messalina now broke forth into unheard-of excesses, when Silius, whether impelled by some fatal infatuation, or judging that the dangers impending over his head were only to be averted by a bold stroke, urged "that all disguise should be flung aside in the matter, they were not driven to the necessity of waiting for the death of the prince; to the innocent deliberate plans might be harmless, but in glaring guilt safety must be sought in audacity. They were backed," he said, "by accomplices alarmed for their safety. As for himself, he was single, childless, ready to marry her and to adopt Britannicus. Messalina would secure her position and maintain it, if they anticipated any action on the part of Claudius who, as he was unguarded against the approach of stratagem, was headstrong when provoked to anger." These suggestions were but coldly received by Messalina, not out of love for her husband, but because she feared lest Silius, having gained the sovereignty, would cast her off. She, however, coveted the name of matrimony, from the greatness of the infamy attaching to such an alliance, which gives zest to those who are steeped in vice. Nor did she stay longer than till Claudius went to Ostia, to assist at a sacrifice; when she celebrated her nuptials with Silius with all the usual solemnities.'

The conduct in the matter of Silius is variously represented. According to Juvenal, a contemporary of Tacitus and Suetonius, Silius

was most reluctant to have anything to say to Messalina, and was wholly free from ambitious views. According to Suetonius, Claudius believed that 'Messalina aspired to share with Silius the imperial dignity:' about which, indeed, there can be little doubt.

The secret history of this mysterious affair would seem to be this:

Messalina from first to last had believed that in herself lay a higher right to represent the Caesars than rested in Claudius, in that two streams of the Julian blood met in her veins. She was weary and disgusted with her half-witted old husband, and she was well aware that a large party among the nobles was impatient of his rule. She was madly in love with C. Silius, consul-designate for the ensuing year, and she determined by a bold stroke to cause a revolution. Whilst her husband was from Rome, she hoped to rouse the people and the guards, place herself and Silius at their head, and put Claudius to death. But in order that this should be effected it was necessary that her lover should be united to her legally. So only could he be elevated to the throne when Claudius was cast from it.

Already, as has been pointed out, what was a new thing in Roman eyes, women of the Julian blood were assuming an independent position, and were claiming an authority apart from their husbands.

Circumstances combined in her favour in an exceptional manner. Omens and prophecies had prepared the people for a change of dynasty, or for some great crisis in the State. The dream of the knight Petra was whispered from one to another. Vintage was approaching, and with the vintage Claudius would die. Another form of the dream was also diligently circulated. Claudius had been seen in vision crowned with empty ears of corn, and this warned the Roman populace that with his continuance of reign famine would ensue. The phoenix was said to have appeared in Egypt, and its last appearance had prognosticated the death of Tiberius. Then a prophecy was brought to the notice of the emperor that before the close of the year death would strike down the husband of Messalina. In a panic of fear, he himself signed the writing of divorce, and sanctioned her marriage with C. Silius, which was to take place with all the usual and legal rites, after which he intended to put the bridegroom to death and reclaim his empress. By this means the prophecy would be fulfilled, and he himself would escape. Suetonius says, 'It is beyond all belief (yet certain) that Claudius did actually sign the writings relative to her dowry; induced to do so, it is said, by the design of averting from himself and transferring upon another the danger with which he was threatened by certain omens,' and the scholiast on Juvenal says the same thing. Such is one explanation of a very dark and mysterious transaction.

Claudius had recently been much shaken by the discovery of an assassin near his person. This man, a knight, Cn. Nonius, meditated

the murder of the prince. Some of his slaves confided the secret to L. Otho, who was out of favour at court, and might be supposed inclined to enter into the plot; but instead of so doing, he gave warning of the projected attempt, and Nonius was watched closely. The knight presented himself before Claudius to pay a morning visit, and subjected himself to the usual search. Then he was suffered to accompany the Caesar to the temple of Mars the Avenger, where the latter was about to offer a sacrifice. At this moment it was discovered that Nonius had succeeded in secreting a hunting-knife, which he had got into his hand ready wherewith to deal the fatal blow. He was at once arrested and tortured, but died without naming a confederate.

Claudius summoned the senate by heralds, and with sobs and tears complained of the dangers to which he was subjected, so that he was nowhere in security. After this incident for some time he would not appear in public. But now he went to Ostia, to inspect the basin he had contrived as a harbour, with its moles and lighthouse.

Messalina, making some excuse of ill-health, remained behind in Rome, and proceeded at once to solemnise the marriage with Silius.

But she had by this step alarmed the freedmen. Her new favourite was not a dancer nor a doctor, no insignificant personage, but young, noble, of handsome appearance, and consul-designate. Should she raise him to the throne, and that this was her intention they did not doubt for a moment, then their rule would be at an end, their power broken. Moreover, Messalina had committed the fatal error of singling out from among them Polybius, whom she suspected of being in the pay of Agrippina, and who was a friend of Seneca, and putting him to death. What had happened to Polybius might happen to them also. Callistus, Narcissus, and Pallas consulted together, and their first intention was to warn Messalina not to proceed further with her plan. Their fears, however, allowed them to come to no conclusion. Callistus, taught by experience in the household of Caligula, was for the utmost caution. Pallas was for letting matters take their course. Narcissus alone was for energetic action, action so sudden that Messalina would be quite unprepared for it.

The freedmen gained two women, Calpurnia and Cleopatra, with money and promises, to assist them in opening the eyes of Claudius to his danger. Both were drilled in their part, and when Calpurnia threw herself at the feet of Claudius with the exclamation, 'Messalina is married to Silius!' she turned to Cleopatra, who was standing near, and asked if she had heard the news. On the latter assenting, she entreated that Narcissus might be summoned. The freedman entered, and begged to be forgiven if he conveyed to the imperial ears tidings that were unfavourable; he said that hitherto he had kept silence over the intrigues of the empress with Vettius, Plautius, and others; that now he did not reproach her for her infidelity, for the presents which she had made to

Silius;—but what constrained him to speak was the danger in which Claudius stood. 'Are you not aware,' he asked, 'what has taken place? The marriage of Silius has been public, before the senate, the people, and the soldiery, and unless you act with promptness the husband of Messalina will be master of Rome.'

Then Narcissus called in the special friends of the emperor: Turranius, the praefect charged with the oversight of the corn, and Lusius Geta, one of the two commanders of the guard, and questioned them on what had taken place. Their reply confirmed that which Claudius had been told; and they strongly urged him at once to return to Rome, take refuge in the praetorium, call on the guard to protect his person, and then proceed immediately to the arrest and chastisement of the guilty. Claudius, completely thrown off his balance by fright, consented to everything proposed. He could neither speak a consecutive sentence nor form a resolution; but he cried out to every one who entered to know whether he were still prince, and whether Silius were not at the head of the State.

The freedmen mistrusted Geta and Vitellius, whom they believed to be completely devoted to Messalina, and the feebleness of character of Claudius was so great that they could not rely on his not changing his course, should those engaged to Messalina gain his ear. They assured him that his only chance lay in transferring the command of the praetorians for a single day to one of the freedmen, and Narcissus declared himself ready to undertake the charge.

Claudius consented, and he at once sent orders to the city for the house of Silius to be surrounded and all within to be arrested. Then Narcissus, not venturing to suffer the emperor out of his influence for an hour, asked for, and obtained, a place in the chariot of Claudius, as a precaution lest the companions of the emperor, Vitellius and P. Caecina Largus, shoud divert the current of his suspicion against himself instead of against Messalina. The conduct of these two men on the journey justified his precaution; for as Claudius on the road vibrated between alarm for himself and regret for his wife, which he exhibited by exclamations of fear or of tenderness, Vitellius would not compromise himself in any way, not feeling certain of the event, but to every ejaculation of Claudius, murmured: 'Shocking! treason!' When Narcissus, moreover, pressed him to speak the truth relative to the conduct of the empress, he equivocated, held back, and refused to declare himself convinced of her guilt. Largus observed a like reticence, so that the whole burden of responsibility rested on Narcissus.

The road over the undulating campagna was long and dreary. Here and there a bit of tufa rock cropped up out of the dingy sand, crested with ilex and laurestinus, then ensued a forest of brushwood, chiefly myrtle and phillyrea, then came long dunes roved over by slow-moving oxen. Claudius was a passionate player at games of chance,

and he had a contrivance in his chariot for dice-playing that the table might not jolt the cubes off as he threw them whilst travelling. But on this day the dice-box was neglected. A deeper game was in progress. Narcissus knew that life and power were at stake, and Vitellius and Largus were full of unrest for their own prospects. When Narcissus reflected on the stupidity of Claudius, says Tacitus, his blind attachment to his wife, he could not calculate but that the fatal weakness of Claudius might spoil all. Yet the passive spirit of the emperor revived his confidence. His solicitude was to prevent an interview, and to obtain the execution of Messalina before she could make her defence; Narcissus feared lest the sight of his wife, her tears, her pleading tones might again enthral the uxorious monarch, and turn his resentment against those who had denounced her.

Let us now turn to Rome, where, according to the representations of the freedmen, Messalina and Silius were preparing for a revolution.

The first step had been taken. The Caesar had himself, so we are assured, signed the contract for the payment of her marriage-portion before he left the city. The ceremony of the marriage was performed with every legal and sacred formality. The purple *Lectus genialis* was spread, the thousand times a thousand sesterces were produced, the customary sum as dower paid with a noble bride; Messalina wore the veil, symbol of a virginal bashfulness that seeks to hide its blushes—but not a flake of modest colour remained in her bold countenance.

The altars smoked with sacrifices to invoke the favour of the gods on this union; the aruspex was present to perform the religious rites, and the seven Roman citizens required by law to witness a divorce. The act of divorce was read by a freedman, and it is possible that this part may have been enacted by Mnester. Nuts were cast over the bride, and perhaps, in the wantonness of their merriment and reckless assurance, she cut apples, and tossed the pips to the ceiling, to see if they would adhere, thence to draw an omen as to their union, as in the banquet described by Horace.

The statement made by Narcissus was probably not too highly coloured, when he said that the marriage had taken place before the knights, senators, and military, for it was an essential part of the plan that it should be made as public as possible.

The month was October, the vintage moon was full, and all Rome, and indeed all Italy, was in the midst of the relaxation and frolic of the Bacchanalian orgies. Liber Pater and Libera were the patrons not of the grape and of agriculture only but of general fertility, and they were constantly regarded as special guardians of marriage. The name of Liber, or the liberator, implied the licence that was tolerated at his festival, licence of speech and of action. Songs—fescennine verses were sung at this season, and also in the nuptial procession. Priestesses, wreathed with ivy, sold cakes of flour, oil, and honey in the streets;

oblations of the must, the new-pressed wine, were poured over every altar, and at the feet of every image of the god of the Vintage.

In the gardens of the Palatine palace, Messalina and her bridegroom were keeping simultaneously the festival of the god of Licence and of their marriage. Regardless of the necessity for prompt action, over-confident in the indolence or imbecillity of Claudius, doubtful lest in the riot of Bacchic orgies any serious step with the military could be taken, and knowing that till the feast was over no legal assembly of the senate could be summoned, Messalina and Silius let slip their opportunity. On the very day on which her enemies in Ostia were bringing against her the capital charge of high treason, she was giving a Bacchic entertainment. In her house she exhibited a representation of the vintage: the wine-presses were plied, the wine-vats flowed, and round them leapt women, girt with scanty fawn-skins, whilst she, as head-priestess of the orgies, with her gold-yellow[1] hair flowing from beneath an ivy wreath, the most beautiful woman in Rome, along with the most beautiful man, led the choral dance in high *cothurni*, he wearing the thyrsus, and tossing his head in Bacchic frenzy, whilst about them danced the tambourine players with tinkling jingles and swelling songs.

In wanton frolic, Vettius Valens, the physician, a discarded lover, climbed the tallest cypress in the garden. Some one called out to him jokingly to ask what he saw. 'A hurricane from Ostia,' he replied. Those who later recalled this incident were undecided whether he really saw a cloud on the horizon, or whether he foresaw what was coming upon that assembly of revellers.

The catastrophe was not to arrive so unexpectedly, the storm to burst so unprepared for, as the freedmen had desired. The friends of Messalina—probably Vitellius—on knowing the danger in which she stood, had sent messengers post haste to Rome, and tidings came to the half-tipsy revellers 'that Claudius was apprised of all, and was on his way to the capital, bent on immediate vengeance.' The company, sobered by their fears, dispersed in all directions, but many of them, in their attempt to escape, fell into the hands of the centurions who, with companies of guards, were marching to the palace.

Messalina and Silius separated, and whilst the latter 'to dissemble his fear resumed the offices of the forum,' she fled to the gardens of Lucullus on the Pincian Hill, that she, as a second Jezebel, had obtained by the sacrifice of Asiaticus on false evidence.

The blow had fallen so suddenly and with such numbing effect, that at the first moment Messalina knew not what to do, but her womanly instinct prompted her on consideration to meet Claudius before he reached the city, and if her wonted power of fascination failed, to present her children to him and obtain pardon through his parental affection for them.

[1] Juvenal, *Sat.* vi. 120, *flavum crinem*—.

She hastily summoned the pedagogue and nurse of Britannicus and Octavia, and bade them attend her on the road to Ostia. Then she hurried to the vestal college and implored the head of the virgins, named Vibidia, to associate herself with her in soliciting the forgiveness of Claudius. On foot, attended by three persons only—so suddenly had her whole train melted away—she traversed the streets. She passed the great racecourse on her right, was soon without the walls, went hard by the pyramid of Cestius, and the great heap of broken pitchers thrown away by the unlading boats that brought wine to the city. The sherds were spread over the soil to the very roadway. Then her strength failed her, she could walk no further. A lumbering muck-cart came by, bouncing on the basaltic pavement, and Messalina entreated to be lifted into it. So the proud woman, the first to be entitled to ride in the gilded carpentum in triumph through the forum, went crouching, pale and shivering with fear, in a dung-cart to meet her husband. The passers-by turned and looked with wonder at her, but 'pitied her not,' says Tacitus, 'as the deformity of her crimes overpowered every feeling of compassion.'

She had not far to go. The imperial outriders came clattering by, and in the distance could be seen the chariot of Claudius approaching. Messalina descended from the cart, and stood in the way with hands extended in entreaty.

But the keen eye of Narcissus had recognised her, and he knew that the decisive moment had come. Drawing closer to the emperor, he endeavoured to screen the distressed woman from his eyes by thrusting under them a paper on which was drawn out a catalogue of her crimes; and when, with piercing cry, Messalina entreated Claudius to listen to the mother of Octavia and Britannicus, the freedman called in his ear, 'Silius—marriage!'

The charioteer drove on. A little way further, at the city gate, the vestal virgin stood forward with the two children, sobbing and frightened. Vibidia, exercising the privilege of her office, demanded that the wife should not be condemned without her defence being heard. Narcissus waved her out of the road, but the woman refused to move till the prince had given the requisite promise. Then, bidding her go and mind the sacred fire, the freedman urged the chariot forward.

Claudius, bewildered, remained inert, a mere tool in the hands of the freedman. He suffered Narcissus to deliver all orders; he was led to the house of Silius and shown furniture and ornaments from the imperial palace that Messalina had sent to her lover, heirlooms of the family to which he belonged, to touch which was beyond her right. In the vestibule was the statue of Silius the elder, that by order of the senate should have been destroyed some time ago. With all the exactness of a Cicerone, Narcissus showed each article in the house that could rouse the indignation of the bewildered prince; and then he con-

veyed the emperor to the Praetorium, where the guards had been assembled to receive him and testify their fidelity. By the advice of his energetic prompter, Claudius made a speech to the soldiery; in his nervous terror it was but poor stuff, and the only sentence in it that could be recalled was a declaration 'that as he had met with no happiness in marriage, he would remain for the future without a wife, and he begged the soldiers to put him summarily to death should he forget his undertaking.'

The soldiers, without understanding all the circumstances, loudly cried out for the names of the guilty persons, that they might deal vengeance upon them.

Claudius ascended the tribunal, and those who had been arrested were brought before him. First came Silius. He declined to defend himself, and asked for a speedy death. He was executed forthwith, together with the knights M. Helvius (Trogus?), Cotta, and Fabius, who met their death with dignity. Then came Titius Proculus, assigned by Silius as guard to Messalina; he offered to turn evidence against the others, but in vain. Vettius Valens, the physician, acknowledged his guilt; then followed the rest of the witnesses who had attested the divorce and re-marriage. Next came the turn of Mnester. In vain did he strip his shoulder to show the scars of the lashes he had received from Messalina, evidences that she treated and despised him as a slave, though retaining him in her court, that she might engross to herself his pantomimic services. But the worst interpretation was put on his conduct; Mnester was represented as having danced underfoot the imperial honour, and he was hurried away to execution. A youth of family, named Montanus, was included in the proscription, for no other crime than that of having for a single day found favour in the eyes of the adulteress. Plautius Lateranus was degraded from his position as senator, but was granted his life for the sake of his uncle, Aulus Plautius.

The trials over, Claudius returned to his palace. He was hungry after his long drive, and called for food, as he seated himself at table.

In the meanwhile Messalina had returned to the garden of Lucullus, where are now the shady walks of the villa Medici, built up on the massive walls above the natural fosse or valley beyond which rise the gardens of the Borghese Villa. Disappointed in her first attempt to reach and turn Claudius, she swayed between hopes and despair. She framed speeches of the most moving character that she would address to Claudius, she tortured her mind to find excuses for her conduct; then the old pride of the empress awoke in her, and she poured forth a torrent of threats against her enemies, in whose net she lay entangled, and over whom she felt sure she would triumph if she obtained that interview with her husband which had been assured her at the intercession of the vestal high priestess. But Narcissus did not disguise from himself that the danger was imminent so long as she lived.

The emperor was at table; his terrors abated under the influence of good food and good wine; his excited nerves relaxed, and his severity dissolved with his fears. He turned to his attendants and gave orders 'to go and inform the unhappy woman that he would hear her plead her cause on the morrow.'

Narcissus at once saw that his resentment was yielding, and that his wonted affection was returning. Instantly rising from table he rushed forth, found the tribune and centurions then on guard, and bade

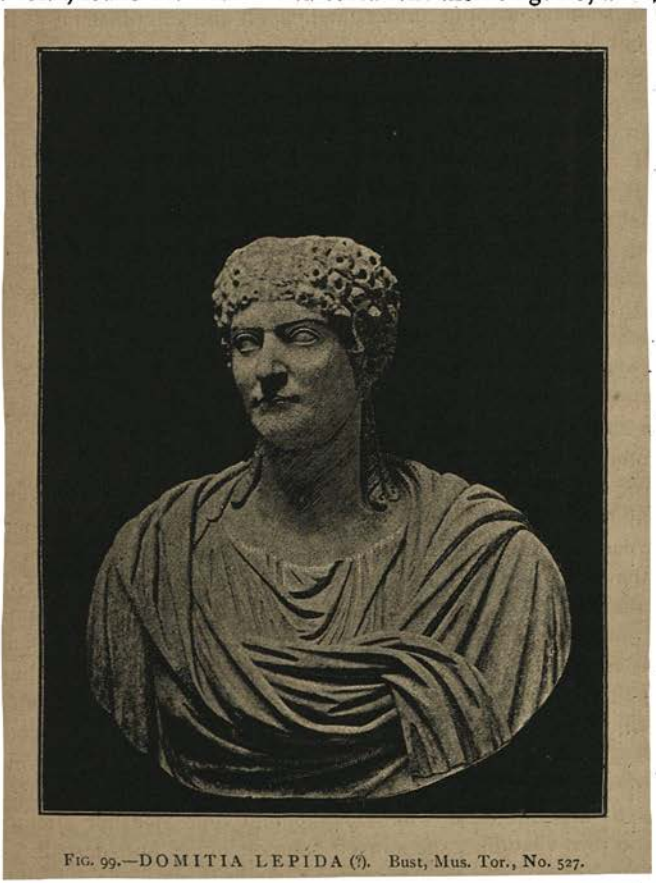


FIG. 99.—DOMITIA LEPIDA (?). Bust, Mus. Tor., No. 527.

them 'precipitate the execution, for such,' said he, 'was the emperor's command.' With them he sent the freedman Euodus to see that his orders were strictly fulfilled.

The wretched woman, exhausted with the frightful tension of the day, was lying by lamplight in an arbour, at the feet of her mother, who was seated. Domitia Lepida had not been on the best of terms with Messalina, her daughter. Perhaps she resented the murder of her

husband by the orders of her daughter. But now, in the hour of desperation and desolation, the mother came to the assistance of her abandoned child. She, older and more experienced than her daughter, was buoyed up by no vain hopes. She saw, what Messalina did not, that the only thing to be asked for was a painless death. Thus she addressed the exhausted, prostrate woman at her feet, and, as a Roman matron of the olden time, exhorted her to forestall the hand of the executioner.

But Messalina was young, she clung to life with desperation, she shrank with horror from the prospect of death; and her spirit, worn out with a vicissitude of extremities of emotion, lacked the energy and strength to nerve her to suicide. Moreover, she could not abandon the hope of escape that still gleamed before her. Weeping she threw her arms about her mother, and laid her head on her lap bewailing her fate. Then the hearts of both stood still for a moment, as they heard the thunder of blows at the door of the deserted, empty house resound through the stillness of the night. The murderers had come, and bursting in the gates they appeared before the fallen empress. The soldiers halted, and in dead silence the tribune approached to communicate to Messalina the order for her execution. The chamberlain Euodus leaped forward to pour out upon the wretched woman a torrent of vulgar abuse.

Now only did the last spark of hope expire in the breast of Messalina, and she put out her hand for the dagger offered her by her mother. But the blows she dealt herself in throat and bosom were with a trembling hand, and scratched the skin only. Then the tribune of the guard in pity ran her through with his short sword.

The body of the empress was granted to her mother, that she might attend to its burial. A few moments later the two children arrived. They had been hurriedly sent for. They found their mother lying in her blood. Octavia never forgot the horrors of that night that left her an orphan.

Claudius was still at table, when the servant whom he had sent to tell the empress he would receive her on the morrow returned with the tidings 'that Messalina was no more.' The particulars were withheld, and he asked no questions. He was left to suppose that she had put herself to death. The day after, when he seated himself at supper, it was said that he asked 'Why the empress did not appear?' After that he ceased to mention her; he made no remark when he saw his children in mourning, nor when he saw that her statues in public places had been thrown down and broken. Men thought this a token of his crass stupidity and want of feeling; but it may have been that he felt his loss, his disappointment too deeply to care to give it expression. The senate, in its exultation at relief from a danger, granted to Narcissus the insignia of a quaestor.

'Whatever the crimes of the miserable woman may have been,' says Dean Merivale—'and the stain of wantonness as well as of cruelty, so often in her station allied to it, is indelibly attached to her name—there seems reason to surmise that her enormities have been exaggerated by sinister influence.'

'In historic matters of this sort,' says Stahr, 'there is a silence more eloquent than detailed accounts. It seems to me that we have such a case here. When Seneca says naught in his works concerning Agrippina, it is intelligible, for he found it expedient not to mention her. But it is more hard to explain his absolute reticence relative to her antagonist. I do not believe I am wrong in giving a motive that does him credit. Assuredly he was well acquainted with the things told of the late empress after her fall; but precisely because he knew from what spring they issued, and what passion was active in enhancing the dark colours wherewith her portrait was painted, his sense of justice withheld him from giving weight to charges which he knew to be in part false, and all exaggerated by deadly hate; he refused to lend to them the authority of his name. Writers of a later period had not, and could not have these scruples. They followed, in more or less good faith, the report and traditions which reached them, even in their most improbable, incredible, and even impossible forms.'

VII.—AGRIPPINA EMPRESS.

No historian so much as hints that Agrippina was in any way engaged in the events connected with the fall of her enemy Messalina, and indeed intervention on her part would have availed nothing; the infatuated woman, her rival, precipitated herself into destruction without the necessity of a hand being extended to give her a final thrust. But that Agrippina was kept fully informed of all that took place cannot be doubted; Pallas was in her

A. U.C. 801.
A.D. 48.
Aet. 57.

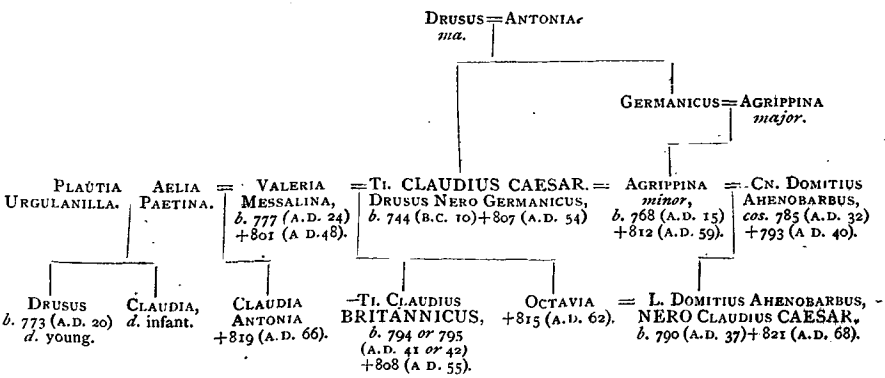

DRUSUS = ANTONIA
ma.
GERMANICUS = AGRIPPINA
major.
PLAUTIA URGULANILLA.
AELIA PAETINA.
VALERIA MESSALINA, b. 777 (A.D. 24) +801 (A D.48).
TI. CLAUDIUS CAESAR. = Drusus Nero Germanicus, b. 744 (B.C. 10)+807 (A.D. 54)
AGRIPPINA minor, b. 768 (A.D. 15) +812 (A.D. 59).
CN. DOMITIUS AHENOBARBUS, cos. 785 (A.D. 32) +793 (A D. 40).
DRUSUS b. 773 (A.D. 20) d. young.
CLAUDIA, d. infant.
CLAUDIA ANTONIA +819 (A.D. 66).
TI. CLAUDIUS BRITANNICUS, b. 794 or 795 (A.D. 41 or 42) +808 (A D. 55).
OCTAVIA +815 (A.D. 62).
L. DOMITIUS AHENOBARBUS, NERO CLAUDIUS CAESAR, b. 790 (A.D. 37)+ 821 (A.D. 68).

FIG. 100.—AGRIPPINA MINOR. Statue in the Lateran, found at Cervetri.

pay, it was however Narcissus and not Pallas who by his energy and inflexibility of purpose accomplished the overthrow of Messalina. But for his determined conduct and the delay of Silius in securing the co-operation of the guards, the revolution would have been accomplished and Claudius dethroned and murdered.

No sooner had Messalina disappeared from the scene than the combination against her dissolved. The freedmen, knowing the helpless character of the emperor, and the certainty that he would fall under the domination of a woman in spite of his protest that he would never marry again, cast about for a wife to take the place left vacant at his side; and each of the three ministers had his own candidate for the place, by means of whom he hoped to obtain supremacy over the other two.

Narcissus stood prominent at the moment. The destruction of Messalina was his work. He alone had planned and carried out the counterstroke which had cost Messalina her life, whereas his confederates had hesitated and been unable or unwilling to take bold action. He felt that he was master of the situation, not because the senate, in acknowledgment of his services, had conferred on him the insignia of a quaestor,—the haughty freedman appreciated the real power in his hands that he possessed and exercised, and despised these honourable badges as child's toys—but because he believed that he held the frightened and muddleheaded emperor in the hollow of his hand to mould to what he chose. He had resolved to replace Messalina by Aelia Paetina, the former wife of Claudius, mother of Antonia, a woman whom he had divorced on the most trivial grounds. Aelia was well acquainted with the habits of Claudius, and the children of Messalina had nothing to fear from her. Callistus on the other hand favoured Lollia Paulina, daughter of the consular, M. Lollius, one who for a brief period had been the wife of Caligula. She was the granddaughter of the far more illustrious M. Lollius, and the heiress of his immense wealth, the spoil of the provinces he had governed and pillaged. Pliny describes to us the jewelry of pearls and emeralds she wore at an ordinary betrothal festival, in her hair, round her neck, arms, and fingers, as worth fifty million sesterces (£380,000).[1] She had been married to C. Memmius Regulus, but on the report of her grandmother's beauty, Caius had sent for her, divorced her from her husband, and married her, but soon divorced her again. Against Aelia Paetina, Callistus urged 'the length of time that had elapsed since Claudius and she had been married, and the fact of the former divorce having left a blot on the name of Aelia, also the presumption that her restoration to her former place as his wife would make her proud.' Moreover, Aelia would be interested in advancing her own daughter at the expense of the children of Messalina, whereas Lollia had no

[1] And this, says Pliny, was by no means her most valuable set of jewelry, such as was worn on great occasions.

children by her former marriages, and would therefore have no interest opposed to her step-children, were she to become empress.

Pallas, however, proposed Agrippina.

The position of affairs was not very unlike that in which Tiberius and the elder Agrippina had stood, uncle and niece, each representing a rival family. Then the mother of the present Agrippina had maintained a jealous resentful attitude towards her uncle, which had involved herself and her children in misery, and caused the death of several of them. Now, once again, uncle and niece stood over against each other, and till this moment the life and fortunes of Agrippina and her son had been in daily, hourly danger, menaced not by a Sejanus, but by Messalina. The younger Agrippina had learned prudence by her mother's mistake. She must seize the opportunity that now offered, and secure her position. She knew for a certainty, as a something about which she could make no mistake, that whosoever succeeded Messalina, whether Aelia or Lollia, or any other noble and ambitious woman, the new empress would use her acquired power to effect the removal of the only woman of commanding influence and rival importance to herself. The death of Messalina relieved Agrippina of peril for a moment only. No choice remained to her but to step into the place of Messalina, or perish along with her son by the sword of the executioner, or the poison of a Locusta.

Pallas could put his case plausibly before Claudius. He represented to him the advisability of reuniting the separated streams of the sacred Julian blood. 'She would bring with her,' said he, 'the grandson of Germanicus, who was in every respect worthy of the imperial fortune: himself of noble descent, and a fit bond of union to the posterity of the Claudian family; she, moreover, had shown herself to be fruitful, was still in the freshness of youth, and should not be suffered to transfer the splendour of the Caesars to another house.'

This last consideration was calculated to throw weight into the scale, as it suggested to Claudius an alternative of political danger. But Agrippina was her best advocate. She had held aloof from the palace as long as Messalina was there, lest she should arouse her jealousy and bring down on herself the sword dangling over her head; but now that this fear was gone, she was free to work on Claudius, and her masterful spirit soon completely enthralled that of her weak and vacillating uncle.

She urged the advisability of a marriage between Octavia, the emperor's daughter by Messalina, and her own son Lucius Domitius, known afterwards by the name of Nero. It was true that Octavia was betrothed to Lucius Silanus, who had engaged the favour of Claudius, so that he had conferred on him the triumphal ornaments; but on the other hand, he was rightly or wrongly represented as a youth of infamous morals, and Claudius, anxious for the happiness of his

daughter, was ready to dissolve the contract when this was represented to him.[1] L. Vitellius, who had been the ready servant to Messalina, was as obsequious to Agrippina. He brought a formal accusation against Silanus, and as he was censor, degraded the young man from his praetorship and expelled him from the senate. This was executed with great severity. One day alone remained before the expiration of the term of office of praetorship, yet Silanus was degraded for that day and a substitute for one day appointed.

It will not be amiss here briefly to recapitulate the chief events in the life of Agrippina up to this point, so as to refresh the memory of the reader; for from this moment the fortunes of the world for nearly twenty years remained in the hands of herself and her son.

Agrippina was born A.D. 15 in the capital of the Ubii, on the left bank of the Rhine, the place that afterwards bore her name, Colonia Agrippina, the modern Cologne. She was three years old when she lost her father, Germanicus. She was twelve when her mother was banished, and seventeen when she lost her by death. After the banishment of her mother, the elder Agrippina, she and her sisters, Drusilla and Julia, and her brother Caius, four years older than herself, were brought up in the house of their grandmother, Antonia. She was married on January 1, A.D. 29, when aged thirteen, to Cnaeus Domitius Ahenobarbus. Suetonius has painted his character in the blackest colours, and tells of him several horrible stories. 'During his attendance on Caius Caesar in the East, he killed a freedman of his own for refusing to drink as much as he ordered him. Being dismissed for this from Caesar's society, he did not mend his manners; for, in a village on the Appian road, he suddenly whipped his horses, and drove his chariot on purpose over a poor boy, crushing him to pieces.' It is easy to see how an accident could be magnified by popular hostility of feeling into an act of wilful brutality. Suetonius pretends to see into the heart of Domitius, who lived some seventy years before his time, and is able to state positively that he drove over the child in the road 'on purpose.' On the other hand Tacitus speaks of him as a good and able soldier; and Velleius Paterculus, a contemporary, speaks of him as 'a youth of most remarkable goodness of disposition.' Had he been the man represented by Suetonius, we may feel assured that Tiberius would never have given Agrippina to him.

In A.D. 32, Cn. Domitius was appointed consul, and after that acted as proconsul and governor of Sicily. In A.D. 36, he was nominated by Tiberius along with his two brothers-in-law, member of a commission to inquire into the distress caused by a great fire in Rome, and to relieve it. He survived Tiberius by three years, though accused of treason just before the death of this emperor. He was saved by the

[1] Tacitus says he was 'unguarded' and not really guilty of the charge brought against him. The accusation was trumped up against him for her own purposes by Agrippina.

decease of Tiberius, and the accession of his brother-in-law, Caius. Such accusations were too rife and reckless to be accepted as well-grounded without evidence.

In A.D. 40, Domitius died of dropsy at Pyrgi, an Etruscan city (the present San Severo), one of the few members of the imperial house who died a natural death.

Lucius Domitius (Nero) was born on the 15th December, A.D. 37, when Agrippina was aged twenty-one, born exactly nine months after the death of Tiberius and the release of her husband from prison, and he was the only child of that marriage. The story told by Suetonius, that when the babe was shown to its father, Cnaeus said, 'Nothing but what is detestable and pernicious to the public can spring from me and Agrippina,' is obviously an invention of the time of Nero.[1] On the other hand, Agrippina related that as the child was born the rays of the rising December sun smote on and illumined him, a sure token of his future glory. It was related—naturally in later times—that when the astrologer Thrasybulus was asked for the presage given by the stars relative to the babe, he answered that he would indeed reign, but would be the death of his own mother, whereupon Agrippina proudly exclaimed, 'Then may he reign and I perish.'

This child was thenceforth the focus of her ambition, the centre of her thoughts; for him she schemed and battled, for him remained tranquil when the storm swept over her head that carried away her sister.

By law one-third of the estates of his father fell to the youthful Nero, aged but three when Cnaeus Domitius died, but Caius who inherited the rest seized on this portion also, and the bereaved child, whose father was dead and whose mother was an exile, was taken care of by his aunt, Lepida. Under her charge he was given over to a dancer and a barber as his pedagogues; but on the accession of Claudius, his father's patrimony was restored to him, and his mother was recalled from banishment. Of the peril in which she stood, and of her caution during the period when Messalina was in the plenitude of her power, and like a female Phaethon was driving the chariot of the sun, enough has been said.

Probably at this time, when Agrippina was resolved on becoming empress, as the only alternative to death, she published her Memoirs, to engage popular sympathy for herself and her son. In it she mentioned the birth of Nero, and in it was probably told the story of a certain mythical prodigy that had grown out of a small natural occurrence. One day a snake's skin was found on the boy's bed, and this Agrippina had enclosed in a bracelet of gold which Nero wore thenceforth on his arm. But this simple incident was exaggerated into something very different. It was told that Messalina had commissioned assassins to enter the bedroom of the child and strangle

[1] 'The extravagance of this assertion is its own condemnation.'—STAHR.

him whilst he slept. But on their appearance a serpent had darted from under his pillow, and they were so frightened that they ran away.

It is also probable that in this book were heaped up all the stories against Messalina that floated on the surface of popular talk at the time, and were there fixed to deepen the popular hatred of the fallen empress; it is not unlikely that they bore as close an alliance to facts as does the tale of the serpent defending the sleeping Nero to the real circumstance.

At the opening of the year 49 nothing was talked about in the capital but the question of the emperor's marriage. According to religious and popular prejudice the marriage of an uncle with his niece was regarded as incestuous and certain to bring down the wrath of the gods on those who contracted such an union and on the nation which tolerated it. Claudius shared these views, he was strict in his adherence to a traditional code of morals, and it would appear that he contemplated the adoption of Agrippina as an alternative, for he repeatedly spoke of her in public at this period as his 'daughter and ward, nursed and brought up in his arms.' There were difficulties in every way, and in his confused mind he did not see how to escape them. A.U.C. 802, A.D. 49. Aet. 58.

In the first place there was Lucius Domitius (Nero), the son of Agrippina, and grandson of Germanicus, who undoubtedly represented the Julian family far more nearly than himself and his own son, Britannicus; for Nero's grandmother was the daughter of Julia, the only child of Octavius. He could not conceal from himself that the true representative of the Caesars, and proper successor to the throne, in the eyes of the people, was Nero. Tiberius had been suffered to usurp the throne, and he himself had been thrust into it, as stop-gaps, because there was at the time of their several accessions no member of the Octavian house capable of reigning. He cannot have doubted that Nero would succeed him, and that his only security in that event for the safety of his own son, Britannicus, was to attach him to the son of Agrippina, and to place him conspicuously in the second place. That Britannicus should be his own successor he at this time did not suppose, however much he may have desired it. He could secure the succession to him only by the murder of Nero, and he was not so unscrupulous as to commit this crime. If Nero was to live, he must do something to provide for the safety of his own son.

Whilst Claudius was turning over his difficulties in his perplexed mind, now meditating the adoption of Agrippina as his daughter, then her elevation to be his wife, L. Vitellius, the tool of Agrippina as before of Messalina, stepped forward to cut short his hesitation, by asking him whether he were prepared to submit to the will of the people and senate. The answer of Claudius was characteristic; he said that he himself was but the first among the citizens and must therefore

obey their will. Thereupon Vitellius hastened to the Comitia, where the senate was assembled, and asked leave to address it on a matter of State importance. Leave having been granted he addressed them in a speech preserved by Tacitus. He began by saying 'That the overpowering labours of the prince, in governing the world, called for support and assistance, in order that, relieved from domestic cares, he might attend to the interests of the public. Moreover, what more honourable alleviation of the cares which oppress a ruler's mind than to take a wife who might share his good fortune and distresses, to whom he might commit his most secret thoughts and the care of his little ones, unhabituated as he was to luxury and voluptuousness, but accustomed to yield obedience to the laws from his earliest years.'

After this preamble, Vitellius paid some compliments to the senate, and then proceeded:—'That seeing they were all of one mind that the prince should marry, it became necessary that a lady should be selected who was distinguished by family, the fertility of her womb, and her unblemished purity of morals. Nor had they long to search before they would find that Agrippina stood pre-eminent for the splendour of her lineage; had given proof of her fruitfulness; and came up to their requirements in virtue. It was,' he said, 'a singularly happy circumstance that, through the providence of the gods, she was a widow, and might be united to a prince who never ranged in his fancies beyond his own wives.[1] They had heard from their fathers, nay, themselves had seen, wives snatched from their husbands by the lawless caprice of the Caesars; a thing never done by the sobriety of the present ruler. He hoped that a precedent might now be made for the guidance of emperors in selecting their wives. To the Romans it was an innovation on old established custom for a man to marry the daughter of his brother. The union of first cousins was also long unknown, yet was in time allowed. And this very novelty now proposed would in time be followed and practised.'

It is perhaps permissible to read between the lines of this speech,—to follow the thoughts of those who heard it during its delivery. The senate were impatient of the régime of freedmen. If Claudius were to marry, there might ensue a repetition of the same perils as had hung over and carried off so many in the senate when Messalina and they were in full accord. It were better that Claudius should be given a wife of commanding abilities, one who would act with independence, and would rule, and not be ruled by, ministers whose backs were scarred with lashes. They were heartily disgusted with the licentiousness of Messalina, which had brought the throne into disrepute, and they

[1] This public and bold assertion of the moral purity of both Claudius and Agrippina goes some way towards discrediting the gossiping scandal of Suetonius relative to both. It will be seen that the speaker laid stress on the virtue of Agrippina as well known, and therefore justifying the choice.

desired that the chief woman in the State should be one of approved and acknowledged virtue.

Moreover, they knew that were any one else admitted to be the consort of the prince and the keeper of his mind and conscience, there would be two parties in Rome waging internecine war, that of the new empress and that of Agrippina; in other words, those of Britannicus and of Nero. Every consideration urged the solution of the difficulty proposed by Vitellius; and with one consent the senate approved his

FIG. 101.—AGRIPPINA MINOR. Profile of the Head of the Statue in the Lateran, found at Cervetri.

motion; many of the senators rushed off at once to the palace, and a crowd of the people collected, perhaps designedly by Vitellius, assembled under the Palatine and shouted at the top of their voices that it was the will of the people that Agrippina should be empress. The senate passed a decree legalising for ever marriages between uncles and their nieces; and Claudius allowed himself to yield to the judgment of the senate and people.

On the day of the public marriage, which took place two days later, two persons only were found to follow the example of the Caesar, a freedman, and a knight, and both together with their brides were invited to attend the marriage banquet of Claudius. Hardly three months had passed since the death of Messalina. At this time Agrippina was aged thirty-three, being twenty-five years younger than her husband.

From this time Rome learned what it was to be under the rule of a woman, as it had never been before, and was never to be again.

Agrippina was not such as Messalina, who was absolutely without dignity, and who, though jealous, was devoid of pride. Nor did she, as Tacitus says, 'like Messalina, mock and trample on the interests of the State in the extravagance of her lewdness.' She speedily acquired absolute control over the feeble mind and will of Claudius, and though, as a woman, she exercised her power to make reprisals on private enemies, yet in the conduct of public business she directed the affairs of State with prudence and with justice. 'The despotism exercised was as strict as though it were that of a man. In her public conduct, she was grave and rigid, frequently haughty and overbearing; no departure from chastity was observable in her home, unless it were necessary to support her power; while an insatiable thirst for money was veiled under the pretext of its use for maintaining the imperial authority.'

The innuendo on her purity we may put aside. It was inconceivable to the prurient Roman mind that Agrippina could have gained the energetic support of Pallas at any other price than her honour, whereas it is certain that her interest would secure her from following the foul traces of Messalina, that her intense pride would never suffer her to stoop to a freedman, and that her extreme caution would guard her against giving her enemies a handle against her. By the publication of her Memoirs she set up her mother as the type of a pure Roman matron, and beside this as a foil the figure of Messalina, purposely dyed to extravagant blackness. Her aim was to exhibit herself as like her mother in the whiteness of her purity.

From this time we encounter the first beginnings of court ceremonial. All such persons as were esteemed fitting persons for admission into the presence of the prince were expected to wear his image in gold on their rings. The emperor himself wore emerald or sardonyx rings. It became customary to seal, not with gems, but with gold.

The senate accorded to Agrippina, 'the daughter, mother, sister, and wife of an emperor,' every possible honour. She was granted the right, previously accorded to Messalina, to ride in the *Carpentum*, the gilded chariot, and enter into the precincts of the Capitol.

Agrippina was a stately woman, past the bloom of beauty, but still noble in appearance. She had two canine teeth on the right side of

her mouth, a token, it was supposed, of a brilliant career. She was fond of birds, and had a tame white nightingale that cost six thousand sesterces; bought at this price and presented to her. She had also a thrush that could speak, and the young Caesars, Nero and Britannicus, cultivated a talking starling that could say words in Greek as well as in Latin. Every day, says Pliny, they devoted time to teaching these birds so that they were able to pronounce whole sentences as well as single words.

We are happily able to form an opinion on good grounds of the personal appearance of Agrippina, for a beautiful statue of her as a priestess, in almost perfect condition, was found at Cervetri, along with an inscription that leaves no doubt as to the personage intended.[1] This splendid statue is now in the Lateran Museum. (Figs. 100, 101.)

The brow is low, but covered with hair drawn down over it, the eyebrows are lightly arched. The face, for a Roman, is unusually long, a long nose, and a long chin. The head is well shaped, like her mother's. When I showed photographs of this statue to Mr. Conrad Dressler, the sculptor, the exclamation that escaped him was, 'What a lady, what a true and royal lady!' And that is the impression the pure, proud, and refined face makes on all attentive students. The portrait of her as Hygieia tells the same story.

In the Louvre is another portrait, a bust of certainly the same person, though the chin is not so long; it is not a good bust.

In the Chiaramonti gallery is a third, also a bust, No. 608 (Fig. 104), a very fine portrait, which struck me, passing repeatedly from one to the other, as having in it a marked family resemblance to the bust of Agrippina the Elder, No. 369. This is not so observable in the engraving. The brow is low, it retreats somewhat, but is broad. The expression is somewhat hard.

A beautiful diademed head at Munich, No. 52, there catalogued as Messalina, is probably also Agrippina the Younger, so also possibly the statue there with one hand folded in drapery and the other extended, No. 51 (Fig. 94). It is catalogued as Agrippina the Elder, wrongly. None of these, however, are to be pronounced to be Agrippina the Younger with the same confidence as is the Cervetri statue; and their resemblance (excepting the Louvre bust) is not very determinable.

The statue of Hygieia, in the Chiaramonti Gallery (Fig. 102), over against the entrance to the Braccio Nuovo, has on it a head not properly belonging to it, of a different marble. That head certainly represents the same person as the Cervetri statue in the Lateran. We shall consider the other busts later.

[1] IVLIAE · AVGVSTAE · GERMANICI · CAESARIS (*filiae*) AGRIPPINAE. The attitude recalls the lines of Virgil (*Aen.* iv. 60):

'Ipsa tenens dextra pateram pulcherrima Dido
Candentis vaccae media inter cornua fundit,'

though in the statue the left hand holds the patera.

VIII.—NERO AND BRITANNICUS.

FOR five years and a half, the reins of government were in the hands of Agrippina, and all her efforts were directed towards securing the succession for her son Nero. Britannicus was not, and never had been regarded as, the rightful heir to the throne. Not only was Nero a far more direct descendant of the founder of the imperial power, but he was also older than Britannicus, and it had been the principle followed by Tiberius to let the elder succeed.

A.U.C. 802-3.
A.D. 49-50.
Aet. 58-59.

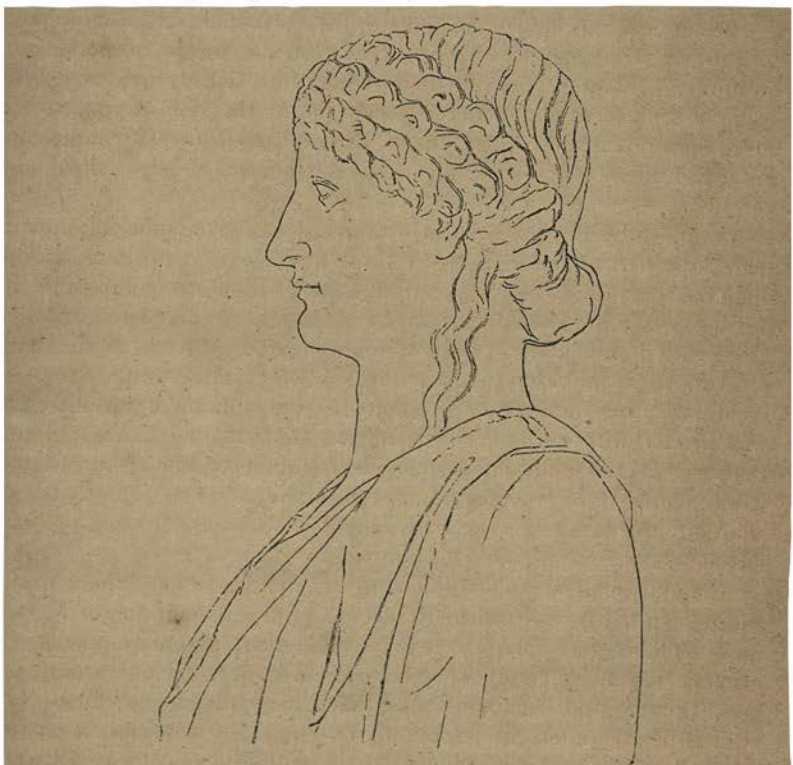


FIG. 102.—AGRIPPINA MINOR. Profile of the Head of the Statue as Hygieia, in the Vatican (after Bernoulli).

The conditions now were precisely analogous to those at the close of the reign of Tiberius. Then there were two princes, Caius, of direct Octavian descent, the son of Agrippina the elder; and his own grandson, Gemellus, a few years younger than Caius, who had no drop of Octavian blood in him. Tiberius therefore nominated Caius as his successor, and passed over his grandson. Now there were again two princes before the public, one the grandchild of Agrippina, and directly representing the

Octavian line, as far as it could be represented through females; and Britannicus, son of Claudius, connected through himself and his mother, with Octavia, the sister of Augustus. The mother of Claudius was Antonia, daughter of Octavia. Such a descent could not weigh with the people against the descent from Octavius himself.

And now that Agrippina was empress, and Nero was both adopted by Claudius, and betrothed by him to his own daughter Octavia, Britannicus passed into the background. The old emperor, as we shall see, suffered Nero to assume the manly toga before the legal period, so that he might at once enter on the official career.

Britannicus was subject to epiletic fits. His father was scrofulous; his mother, if we may trust her bust at Florence, was of unsound constitution; Britannicus not only had frequent fits, but his mind was, as is usual in such cases, debilitated by them.[1] At this time Agrippina had no reason to fear the rival claims of Britannicus, neither his father nor he urged them. The superior right of Nero was acknowledged universally.

Owing to his altered health, Britannicus was given other attendants than those he had before; one of those now removed, Sosibius, was an infamous creature, who had been Messalina's agent in compassing the death of Valerius Asiaticus. He was sentenced to death, on what charge we do not know.[2] This is represented by Tacitus as the doing of Agrippina, in order to place the son of Claudius in the hands of creatures of her own. But he admits that possibly the unfortunate boy was affected with his father's infirmity. He says that it was reported that 'he was not deficient in quickness of understanding; but whether it was really so, or whether he was given credit for it without having afforded any proof that he had wits, because folks pitied his hard fortune,' it was not possible for him to say.

Claudius made a point of having his children about him at meals, and he can hardly have failed to see what the real condition of his son was. There were quarrels between the boys, and Britannicus was insolent to his stepmother. 'He ridiculed her officious attentions,' says Tacitus, and Suetonius says that when Britannicus called Nero 'Brazenbeard' after his adoption, the elder boy flew into a passion and called him a 'changeling.' Late authorities, such as Dio and Zonaras, misunderstood the position of the two boys with relation to the succession, and supposed that the setting back of Britannicus was done by Agrippina in order to force into notice her own child, who had less claims than the other. But neither the people of Rome, nor the senate, nor Claudius himself, had any doubt whatever as to which was

[1] Tacitus pretends that Agrippina so represented him, but that he was not really so. It would be astonishing if he were otherwise, the offspring of a father who had been paralysed when young, and of a deformed mother.

[2] Dio says that he was charged with attempting to murder Nero.

crown prince, and as crown prince Nero was honoured from the first, and acknowledged by the emperor.

At the same time that Agrippina removed from Britannicus the injudicious, if not vicious, attendants given him by Messalina, she hastened to give to her own son the best possible instructor and guide she could find.

This was Seneca, who had spent eight years in exile in Corsica. He had shown his stoic philosophy with ostentation in banishment, yet he had condescended to the basest flattery of Messalina and the freedmen, in the hopes of obtaining his recall. There was no man who stood in higher repute at the time. Nero had been neglected and left to unworthy servants when in the house of his aunt Lepida, a neglect and disregard of a duty Agrippina never forgot or forgave. When she removed him from his aunt's house, on her own recall from exile, she gave him as tutors Burrhus, a worthy, honourable man, and Anicetus, an ingenious mechanician, but one who proved unprincipled, and was dismissed by Agrippina, against whom, accordingly, he bore undying resentment.

To these men she associated—or rather placed over them—M. Annaeus Seneca, now recalled and reinstated in his property, and invested with the praetorian rank. But Seneca, though he could not decline the office of tutor, accepted it with repugnance. He soon perceived that the boy was wanting in moral character, that his intellect was of a low order, and that he was of uncontrollable temper, which he had never been taught to hold in restraint. On the very first night in which he entered on his duties, he dreamed that he was appointed tutor to Caligula, and he speedily assured himself that his pupil was, as he confided to his intimate friends, an untamed lion, whose savagery would break forth as soon as he had tasted blood.

It was at this time, and in allusion to his undertaking, that Seneca wrote his work *On Anger*. In it he speaks of the fair and red complexions—and Nero was fair—as being specially prone to anger, and he gives instructions how a youth of this character should be trained. 'He is to be permitted relaxation, but not suffered to lapse into laziness and give himself up to amusement; for an only son who is much considered and denied nothing, whose tears the ever-anxious mother wipes away, if he complains of his teacher, and if his complaints are attended to, then he is injured thereby in his inmost soul, and will never be able to endure opposition.' The reference to Nero and Agrippina is obvious enough.

The betrothal of Nero to Octavia, which now took place, exhibited the pedantic adhesion of Claudius to forms which had lost their significance. Nero, by adoption, was now his son, and therefore brother to Octavia, accordingly legal impediments stood in the way of their marriage; this was got over by Claudius having his daughter adopted into another family.

Secure though we might suppose the position of Agrippina to have

been, she did not feel that it was so. She was suspicious of Lollia Paulina, the candidate proposed as a wife for Claudius by Callistus; from her enormous wealth—perhaps from her beauty also—Agrippina feared that a cabal might be formed to bring her into favour with Claudius, rouse his conscientious scruples as to his union with his niece, obtain a divorce, and the installation of Lollia in her room. That there were grounds for such a suspicion we may suppose, for Agrippina was hardly one unnecessarily to provoke alarm by high-handed dealings. Lollia was accused of having consulted magicians and astrologers, and of having sent to the oracle of the Clarian Apollo relative to the marriage of Claudius with Agrippina, to ascertain whether it was likely to last long, and whether it were an offence in the eyes of the gods. That she did this is probable enough, and the use she might have made of oracle and prophecy would have seriously affected the opinion of the people of Rome towards the empress. Claudius himself addressed the senate against her; he spoke of her nobility of blood and position, purposely avoiding reference to her brief union with Caligula; he stated that she had been engaged in treasonable plots, and that he desired her banishment from Italy, and the confiscation of a portion of her goods. Accordingly she went into exile; but Agrippina was not satisfied; she sent a tribune after her to put her to death, and bade him bring to her the head of her rival, that she might be certain that Lollia Paulina was dead.

When the head was brought to Agrippina, says Dio—who, be it remembered, wrote 180 years after—as she could not recognise it, she opened the mouth with her own hand to examine the teeth, and assure herself of the identity by their peculiar formation.[1] Tacitus says nothing of this; he tells us that Lollia Paulina was constrained by a soldier to commit suicide, and Suetonius says nothing about it at all. We are certainly not justified in accepting the horrible story of Dio. It is possible that Lollia may have committed suicide of her own accord when conducted by the soldiers in charge of her to the destined place of banishment. It seems improbable that a soldier should commit a crime except under signed orders from his commanding officer or the emperor.

Tacitus tells us that another illustrious lady, Calpurnia—he does not say what further name she bore—was banished by Agrippina; and that she was afterwards recalled by Nero. The reason for her banishment was, says Tacitus, 'that the prince had praised her beauty in casual discourse.'[2]

[1] It was Agrippina who had the peculiarity in her teeth. Dio has transferred the peculiarity to Lollia.

[2] Calpurnia was the name of one of the two women who had informed Claudius of the marriage of Messalina. It is certainly singular, if the Calpurnia who was banished were really an 'illustrious lady,' that Tacitus, though twice mentioning her, should say nothing by which her family can be told. On the other hand, it is quite possible that Agrippina may have seen that the Calpurnia who occupied an ambiguous position in the palace, and who had helped to upset Messalina, was gaining undue influence over Claudius, and so may have removed her.

The emperor, now in his sixtieth year, was becoming more than ever mentally feeble, and Agrippina never suffered him to appear in public ceremonials alone; it was obvious to the world that the rudder of the vessel of the State was in her hand. We possess numerous indications that show how widely this was felt. In Ephesus, Miletus, Acmonia, Hierapolis, Mytilene, and probably many other cities, divine honours were given to her; medals were struck in Asiatic cities bearing her likeness; on those of Alexandria, and on Italic coins, she was represented as Ceres. On inscriptions she is named along with Claudius, or alone, as the daughter of Germanicus. An inscription given by Gruter tells us how two functionaries vowed an offering of ten pounds weight of silver for the health of the Emperor Claudius, and one of five for that of Nero, son of Agrippina. No oblation was made for Britannicus, which is significant.

The name of the empress was given this year to the colony of veterans settled on the Rhine at the capital of the Ubii, where Agrippina was born. The inhabitants consisted partly of natives, partly of the veterans, and partly of Roman traders. An inscription informs us that the date of the erection of this colony was on February 17th or 18th. At the same time Colonia Augusta Trevirorum (Trèves) was probably founded.

The dominant position of the empress was made manifest in Rome at the triumph of Claudius, consequent on the victories of Ostorius Scapula in Britain, and the capture of Caractacus. The fame of the valour of Caractacus had reached Rome, and 'all longed to behold the man who, for so many years, had defied the Roman arms.'

The people were summoned to see him, and the praetorian bands stood under arms. Two thrones had been erected, on one of which sat Claudius, on the other Agrippina, 'in full view of the assembly, —a thing as new as it was unauthorised by ancestral custom, for a woman to preside over the Roman ensigns. But she herself claimed a share in that empire which her ancestors had acquired.' Before the imperial pair moved the procession of captives, 'the servants and followers of the British king in their trappings and collars, with all the spoil of his wars borne along. Then came his brothers, his wife, and daughter, and lastly himself, attracting the gaze of all. All the rest stooped to supplicate for life'—for it was the Roman custom at a triumph to massacre the captives—'but not so he; standing before the imperial throne, he said: "If my control over prosperity had corresponded to my rank and to my fortune, I should have entered this city as a friend, not as a captive. Because you Romans aim at extending your dominion over all mankind, it does not follow that all men should cheerfully submit to the yoke. If you take my life, all will be forgotten; if you preserve my life, as long as I live I shall remain a monument of your clemency."'

Claudius pardoned Caractacus, with his wife and brothers, and, released from their chains, they did homage to him and to Agrippina.

The conquest of Britain gave Claudius an excuse for the extension of the Pomoerium, or bounds of the city, a thing that according to popular belief, could only be done by one who had extended the confines of the empire. As the realm stretched out so might the bounds of the city; the one expanded with the other. Claudius now included the

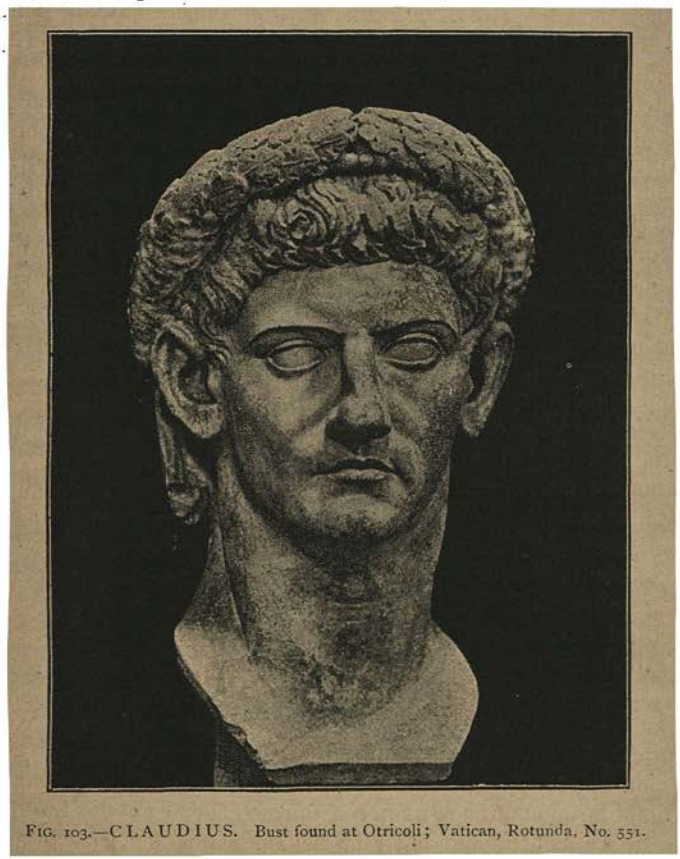


FIG. 103.—CLAUDIUS. Bust found at Otricoli; Vatican, Rotunda, No. 551.

Aventine within the confines. Although the Servian Wall included it, yet hitherto the Aventine had, out of religious prejudices, not been regarded as forming a portion of the city. An inscription commemorative of this still exists in Rome, and is interesting because in it is employed one of the three new letters which Claudius attempted to introduce into the alphabet. These letters were the digamma Ⅎ for the consonant V, the anti-sigma Ↄ for BS and PS, and the sign ⋮ for the sound between I and U, as in the second syllable of Aegyptus. Before his accession Claudius had published a tract advocating the use of these

characters, and now that he was emperor he issued an edict enforcing their use. Tacitus tells us that in his time inscriptions engraved in brass in the temples and squares bore these characters.

Claudius sought to introduce the Eleusinian mysteries into Rome, but opposed zealously the admission of a number of foreign rites and superstitions such as the mystic tendency of the age encouraged. This was why he so readily gave ear to accusations of magic, why he banished the Chaldaean astrologers, and why he forbade many secret religious worships that were creeping in and finding favour. His humanity also prompted him to make the human sacrifices of the Druids penal. Augustus had forbidden the citizens of Rome to take part in these sacrifices, but with the extension of the citizenship to Gauls, and the Romanising of the inhabitants of Gaul, Druidism had not only not ceased, but threatened to invade the capital and to proselytise the nobility, always eager after something new. Claudius forbade the cultus of Druidism, with its associated augury and charming for diseases, and he even put to death certain persons of distinction who in spite of his rescript continued to practise the bloody rites, or consult the suppressed ministers.

In December, A.D. 50, Nero had entered on his fourteenth year. With the conclusion of that it was customary for young Romans to assume the manly garb, and such days were to members of the imperial house also those in which they entered on offices of state, and people and soldiery expected gratuities and amusements.

A.U.C. 804.
A.D. 51.
Aet. 60.

But Agrippina had reason to hasten the advancement of her son to manhood before the expiration of the legal term, for again signs in heaven and earth filled men with alarm and expectation of the death of the prince. Ill-omened birds were seen perched on the temples and other buildings that crowded the top of the Capitol; three suns appeared in the sky; the earth reeled and houses were overthrown, and in the commotion occasioned by the earthquake many lives were lost, amongst these probably the thirteen year old daughter of C. Ummidius Quadratus, governor of Dalmatia, whose monument still remains in Rome. The harvest had been bad, and famine prevailed. Agrippina obtained permission to have Nero invested with the toga before the proper time; on this occasion there was again an earthquake, and at night the skies flamed with auroral fires. Whatever bad omens might be drawn in private from these signs, public honours and tokens of confidence were showered on the young prince. Claudius himself led him into the senate and conferred on him the title of Princeps Juventutis, which involved the leadership of the knightly centuries. He was given proconsular authority with its insignia outside the city walls, and nominated to the consulship upon which he was to enter when he attained his twentieth year. The emperor rati-

fied all the honours passed by acclamation in the senate, and his adopted son thanked him for his condescension before the assembled fathers. At the same time Nero was received into the priestly colleges, and the knights dedicated to the consul-designate a shield and a memorial. Medals were struck, and the statue of Nero was erected alongside of those of the other members of the reigning house. The young prince was exhibited to the people and the guards in military attire, and he promised them liberal largesses. He placed himself at the head of the praetorians and marched before them with a shield on his arm.

Then followed a triumphal show in the circus in which Nero appeared in imperial vesture, whereas Britannicus walked in the simple garment of a child with the bulla about his neck.

In order further to bring the young crown-prince before the public, he was made to plead before the senate the grievances of the inhabitants of Bononia, which had suffered from a conflagration. He addressed the emperor and senate in a speech composed for him by Seneca, and obtained for the afflicted city a liberal grant of money.

When Claudius left the capital, as consul, to offer a sacrifice at the Latin feast in the Alban mountains, the praefecture of the city was granted to Nero, and although the emperor, before leaving, had given express orders that no cases of importance were to be submitted to the boy for judgment, yet the advocates disregarded his monition.

Not long after this a tumult broke out on account of a rise in the price of bread, and Claudius was assailed on the tribunal by an angry mob that heaped on him abuse, and pelted him with mouldy crusts. He was forced to vacate his chair and escape into the palace by a back entrance. In fact the magazines contained corn that would last for but fifteen days, so that fears of distress were entertained. Claudius sent soldiers to disperse the rioters, and issued a proclamation to assure the people that the deficiency would speedily be made good; and informed them that in the event of his death they were to look to Nero, who was sufficiently old to assume the reins of government and provide for the exigencies of the occasion. This was a distinct announcement of his intentions with regard to the succession; it was in accordance with the expectations of the people, and jumped with their inclinations.

Fortunately the winter was mild and the service of corn ships was not interrupted by storms, so that the distress was never acute.

According to the arrangement of Augustus, the praetorian guards were under the command of two prefects, and at the present time these were Lusius Geta and Rufus Crispinus, both men who had been deeply indebted to Messalina and were presumably ill-affected to her successor.

Agrippina, who was resolved to secure the devotion of the guards to herself and her son, pointed out to Claudius that a divided command was injurious to military discipline and advised him to appoint a single

commander over the whole body. When he agreed to her proposal, she obtained the nomination of Burrhus to this important post, the instructor of Nero in his military exercises, an admirable soldier and an upright man, also one wholly devoted to her cause.

In fact Agrippina was conscious that she had many enemies, and that in secret a combination of the discontented was being formed against her, with the intention of bringing Britannicus forward in opposition to her son Nero. She was given warning of this by a senator named Junius Lupus who raised an accusation against L. Vitellius, her influential agent, now a man well advanced in years. The charge was absurd; he was accused of conspiring for the throne, but it was just one to rouse the alarm of the feeble-minded emperor, and it required all the energy of Agrippina and the exertion of her power over him to obtain the acquittal of Vitellius and the banishment of his false accuser.

Agrippina, conscious of her danger, never left her husband unwatched. He was not to be trusted in public—he was almost certain to do something stupid unless she were by as his prompter. Thus one day when he sat in the senate to hear complaints, his seat was surrounded by the delegates of Bithynia, sent to complain of the exactions of their governor. They either spoke unintelligibly or else there was so much noise in the senate at the time that Claudius could not understand what they asked, and turning to those who surrounded him he inquired what these petitioners wanted. With great impertinence Narcissus said, 'They are thanking you for having given them so just a governor.' 'Very well then,' said Claudius, 'let him remain in office for two years longer.' After this incident Agippina had a seat placed for her near his, so that she might prevent a repetition of any such blunders, and might guard against her husband incurring ridicule by his folly.

IX.—THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN NARCISSUS AND AGRIPPINA.

THE people of Rome, especially the nobility, were becoming impatient for a change. They knew that the emperor was in his dotage, and they chafed under the rule of a woman.

A.U.C. 805. A.D. 52. Aet. 61. In his early years Claudius had been full of infirmities, his youth had been one succession of illnesses, but with full manhood he seemed to have shaken off his bodily ailments, though his mental condition never improved. His best friends could say of him little more than that he was well-meaning.

'In reading of the shattered health and frame of the prince who was raised unwillingly to the throne from his desk, at a period far beyond the middle of life, untrained for government, and with no natural bent towards affairs, we cannot but admire the force of the

Roman character, which appears to have borne this feeble creature through labours which might task the highest powers and the happiest disposition. Yet this incessant strain of mind and body seems to have been favourable to his health, which recovered its tone under the labours of the principate. In judging of the character of the poor old man, whose private failings have been elevated into notoriety, some allowance must be made for the coarseness of the times, and the ordinary licence of his associates. Nor must we forget how

FIG. 104.—AGRIPPINA MINOR.—Bust in Mus. Chiaramonti, No. 605.

readily the scandalous anecdotes of the day were accepted by annalists and biographers as veritable history.'[1]

The Romans could ill brook the frankness with which their prince spoke of his former experiences, when he had been in the shade and in comparative poverty. The victuallers of Rome and the suburbs complained of the vintners furnishing meat meals to those who called at their taverns. In their view, the hungry should eat at one place and

[1] Merivale, *History of the Romans*, vi. p. 133.

drink at another. The case was tried in court. Claudius was present. He at once took the side of the vintners, or rather of the peasants who came marketing to Rome, and showed how hard it was for them to have to dine in one house and drink in another.[1] He recalled his own experiences when his means were cramped, and exclaimed, 'I ask you who can live without a scrap of meat?' The senators, instead of considering the kindly thought for the muleteers and day labourers with whom their emperor had associated in the time of his disgrace, were offended at his lack of dignity, and they held up their hands in horror when he proceeded to enumerate the little pot-houses whence he had formerly drawn his wine, and wherein he had sat and refreshed himself.

So also, it was thought ridiculous that he should promulgate a decree recommending the juice of the yew-tree as a specific against the bite of a viper; or at vintage-time should issue a reminder that the bungs of wine-casks should be well stopped with pitch,—when these were instances of a wish to impart useful instruction to the people.

It was also thought incompatible with his dignity as censor to dismiss a young man accused to him of dissolute conduct, when his father gave testimony in his favour, with the saying that 'a man's father was his proper censor.' Even his strict justice was derided. Because his attendant officers had swept into his court a number of persons, some charged with living in celibacy, others with want of children, others for being members of the senate without having the means to support their position, and the one set produced their wives, the second their children, and the third gave irrefutable evidence that they were in comfortable circumstances,—and in face of this evidence, Claudius did not punish them, the Roman nobility scoffed at him as an inefficient censor. A knight was accused of having stabbed himself. He stripped himself in court and asked to have the scar found. Claudius dismissed the case, to the disappointment of the crowd who desired to see a man executed for having attempted suicide. Delation and condemnation were a daily amusement and excitement to the people of Rome. They cared nothing whether those accused were guilty or innocent; what they desired was a sensation, and a judicial murder. They were restless—through all classes ran the fever of impatience for a change. It mattered little who succeeded to power so long as there was a successor. A sense of humiliation was prevalent in having at the head of the State a limping, stupid and dazed old man. It was in vain for the senate to forbid the consultation of oracles and prophets, in vain to banish magicians; in the restlessness of the public mind men and women would have recourse to those who pretended to have the power to read the future.

At the opening of the year, Furius Scribonianus, son of the bold

[1] The same case came up in the succeeding reign and then the victuallers carried their point.

rebel of A.D. 42, who was living in banishment with his mother Junia, was accused, along with her, of having consulted the Chaldaeans as to the termination of the emperor's life. Claudius was gracious enough for the second time to pardon 'the son of his enemy,' as he called him; but Scribonianus died shortly afterwards in exile.

In January of the same year the emperor, in a speech before the senate, brought forward the case of the marriage of free women with slaves. Such connections had become not uncommon, and it was advisable to make some rule about them. By decree of the senate a difference was made in the case of the consent of the master of the slave being given or withheld. In the former case the woman remained free, in the latter she passed into slavery, and all her children, the issue of the union, became slaves also. This law was maintained in the Code till the time of Justinian, and was named after Claudius. It was passed at the instigation of the freedman Pallas. At this time the insignia of a praetor were decreed to Pallas, together with a grant of a large sum of money; not for having suggested this law, but because he had well served the State, and had been a useful minister to the emperor. The excellent administration of government during the reign of Claudius, the useful works undertaken by him, the foundation of colonies, that had been neglected by Tiberius and Caius, the extension of the citizenship, the admission of provincial nobles into the senate, the useful laws passed in his reign, were due far more to the freedmen that directed the mind of the prince and held him to what was proposed, than to his own initiative and perseverance. They amassed colossal fortunes; but this was their pay for a thousand benefits bestowed upon the State by their orderly and prudent management.

In the foregoing year Nero had made a Latin speech as the advocate of the distressed city of Bononia. In this year he appeared on behalf of Rhodes, that had been deprived of its freedom in A.D. 44, and in a Greek oration, acquired by memory, he pleaded for a restoration of the lost privileges. His request was granted, and the grateful Rhodians, in honour of their advocate, struck medals bearing his head, surrounded by the solar rays.

Of the three important ministers of Claudius, one, Callistus, was dead; Pallas was devoted to the interests of Agrippina, but Narcissus, who had obtained the overthrow of Messalina, was dissatisfied at not having obtained the recognition for his services that he had expected, and at not standing first in the councils of the empress. Both Pallas and Narcissus were probably men of advanced age. Pallas was sufficiently old and experienced in A.D. 31 to have been trusted by Antonia in a critical affair that concerned the life and fortunes of the imperial house, he had then long served her as steward of her goods, and cannot have been at that date much younger than thirty-five. If that were so, he was now between fifty and sixty, not so old but that there was

scope for the disappointment and jealousy of his rival Narcissus to poison the public mind against him and the empress, and, as the event proved, whisper base insinuations into the imperial ear also.[1] Either Pallas warned Agrippina to be on her guard against him, or her own woman's tact sufficed to inform her that she had a dangerous enemy in Narcissus, and she did her utmost to break his power with Claudius.

For eleven years Narcissus had been engaged in directing the works for the drainage of the Fucine Lake. This lake lay over two thousand feet above the sea, and was thirty-five miles in circumference. Having no natural outlet, the villages on its banks were subject to frequent inundations, and as early as the time of Julius Caesar, the Marsi, who lived round about, petitioned for help and advice how to carry off the superabundant waters. Claudius undertook the construction of an emissary at his own cost, on condition that he should receive all the land reclaimed by the drainage. It was his intention to convey the waters into the Liris by a tunnel three and a half miles in length, and hewn, for a great part of the way, through the solid rock. The emissary was opened by Claudius and Agrippina with a great gladiatorial display in A.D. 52.

'A passage having been cut through the mountain between the lake and the river,' says Tacitus, 'in order that a greater number of persons might be induced to come and see the magnificence of the work, a sea-fight was got up on the lake itself. Claudius equipped galleys of three and four banks of oars, and manned them with 19,000 mariners; surrounding the space with a line of rafts, to limit the means of escape, but giving room enough in its circuit for the rowers to ply the oars, for the pilots to exert their skill, for the ships to be brought to bear upon each other, and for all the usual operations in a sea-fight. Parties of the praetorian guards, foot and horse, were stationed on decked ships. The shores, the adjacent hills, and the tops of the mountains, were crowded with a countless multitude, many from the neighbouring towns, others from Rome itself, impelled by desire to witness the spectacle, or coming in compliment to the prince; so that the appearance exhibited was that of a vast theatre. The emperor presided in a superb coat of mail, and not far from him sat Agrippina, in a mantle of cloth of gold. The battle, though between malefactors, was fought with the spirit of brave men; and, after great bloodshed, they were excused from pressing the carnage to extremities.'

Pliny and Suetonius give further details.

The hostile fleets were supposed to represent those of the Sicilians and Rhodians. On elevated seats in splendid apparel sat the emperor, Agrippina, and Nero. Britannicus is not mentioned. The

[1] Tacitus himself informs us that the charges of undue familiarity between Pallas and the empress were made by this disappointed and envious man. Narcissus is, as far as we know, the sole authority for them.—*Ann.* xii. 65.

signal for the combat to begin was a silver triton rising in the midst of the lake and blowing a blast from a mussel-shell. The fleets passed before the imperial daïs, and the criminals condemned to fight shouted, 'We, the death-doomed, salute thee!' whereupon Claudius replied, 'And I salute you in return.' Then there was an arrest in the proceedings. The unhappy men took the gracious salutation as a token that they were pardoned, and they sheathed their swords. Claudius, alarmed at their conduct, and misunderstanding it, hesitated, not knowing what to do. They refused pertinaciously to fight each other; then he thought to have them hewn down by the guards, and fire cast into their vessels. He sprang from his throne, and running up and down on the bank, screamed, with stammering lips and confused sounds to the victims to engage in the conflict. They accordingly submitted, and 'fought with all the courage of brave men.' After the battle had been carried on for some time, the emperor gave the sign to suspend the carnage.

'Then'—we quote Tacitus again—'the channel through which the water flowed off was exhibited to view, when the negligence of the workmen became manifest, as the work was not carried to the depth of the bottom or centre of the lake. The excavations were therefore, after some time, extended to a greater depth; and to draw the multitude once more together, a show of gladiators was exhibited upon bridges laid over the emissarium, in order to display a fight of infantry. Moreover, an erection for the purpose of a banquet at the place of exit of the waters caused great alarm to the assembly; for the force of the water rushing out carried away whatever was near it, dislodged what was further off, and terrified the guests with the crash and noise. At the same time Agrippina, converting the emperor's alarm to her own purposes, accused Narcissus, the director of the work, of avarice and robbery; nor did Narcissus repress his anger, but charged Agrippina with imperiousness, and with extravagant hopes.' This last was a clear insinuation as to the scheme for the succession of Nero, and of the resolve of Narcissus to frustrate it.

Considering that on both occasions there was mismanagement, Narcissus certainly was to blame. On the second occasion the reproaches of Agrippina provoked an exceedingly indecorous scene. After having publicly insulted the empress, Narcissus was well assured that he or she must fall, and he set to work to undermine her position with all the energy and determination of his character. He had destroyed one empress, and he would destroy another.

Soon after this, towards the close of the year, Claudius fell ill. He suffered from such internal pains that, as he himself said, he was tempted to put an end to himself. Nero appeared before the senate and vowed circus games for the recovery of his father. A.U.C. 806. A.D. 53. Aet. 62.

Claudius recovered, indeed; but it was obvious not to Agrippina only, but to the old emperor himself, that his days were numbered.

Again was Nero brought before the public eye as the patron and protector of the distressed. This time he pleaded in Greek the cause of Ilium, and asked that the city, whence the Julian race drew its origin—a city that might be called the mother of Rome—might be relieved from the burden of taxation; and naturally the demand of the crown prince was not refused. Nero was at this time in his sixteenth year, and Octavia, the emperor's daughter, was about twelve; an age at which Agrippina herself had been married. Why delay the marriage any longer? It was accordingly solemnised, and at its solemnisation the young prince gave the games which he had vowed during the illness of Claudius. There were races and fights with beasts. At the same time he solicited as a favour the release of Apamea Cibotos from taxation for the space of five years, on account of its almost complete destruction by fire.

But notwithstanding the acclamations of the people, Agrippina felt that the powerful freedman was a menace to her. T. Statilius Taurus, who had been governor of Africa, was charged with a tyrannous use of his power in the province, and his own legate denounced him in the senate. It was said that Agrippina coveted his gardens—as Messalina had coveted those of Valerius Asiaticus—because she took sides against the accused. He committed suicide before judgment was given; and the senate, in spite of her efforts to save him, expelled the accuser from their ranks. Agrippina was thus shown that her power, though still great, was not absolute, and might at any moment fail.

Various prodigies gave token to the capital, at the opening of the year A.D. 54, that the fate of Rome had reached a turning-point. The ensigns and tents of the soldiers were surrounded with lambent flames; a bloody rain fell; bees swarmed and settled on the Capitol; a pig was born with claws like a hawk; the statue of Drusus on the archway on the Appian road was struck with lightning; the doors of the temple of Jupiter Victor opened of their own accord; a general sickness broke out in Rome, and swept away many persons of distinction within a few months, among them a quaestor, an aedile, a tribune, a praetor, and a consul; and finally a comet hung like a flaming sword in the sky.

A.U.C. 807.
A.D. 54.
Aet. 63.

But there were other signs which, to a mind not steeped in superstition, were more significant of a crisis in affairs. Claudius's health was visibly failing, and he did not disguise from himself or from others that he was aware he had reached the term of life allotted to him. He made his will, and in it nominated his stepson as his successor, and made all his officers of state append their seals to the document.

Nevertheless it was obvious to Agrippina that Claudius had been alienated from her. Some one—and she could not doubt who it was—

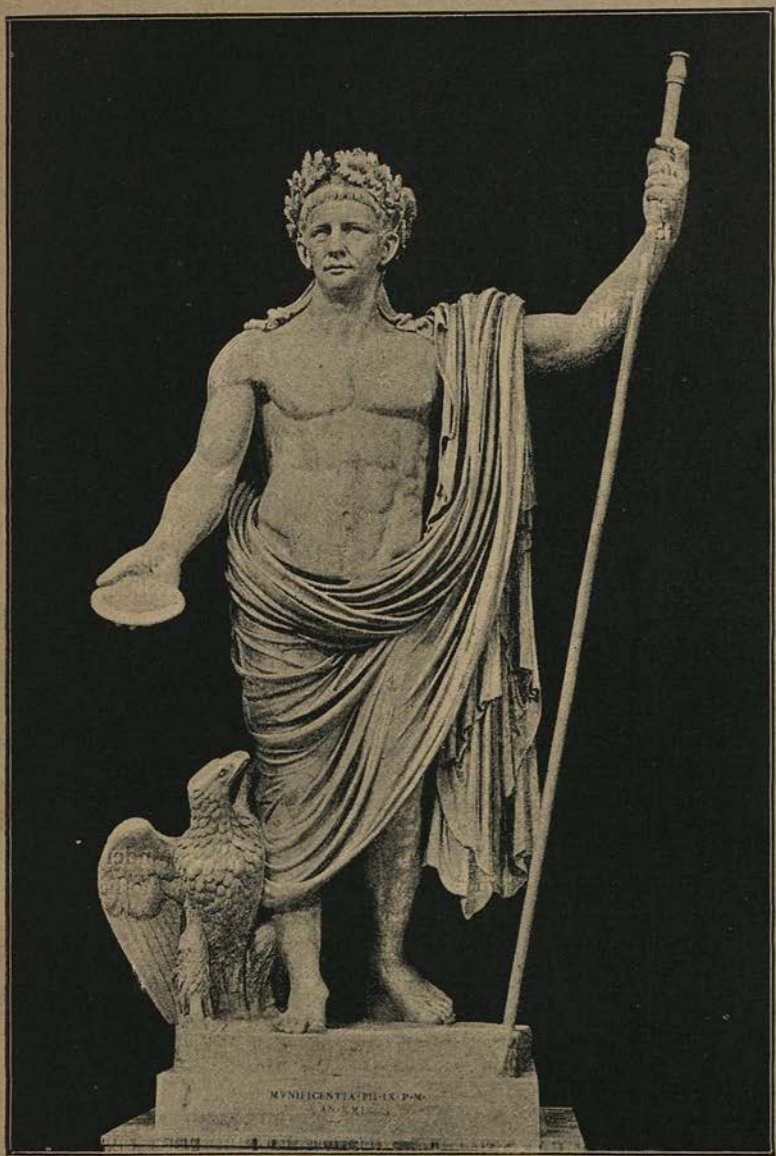


FIG. 105.—CLAUDIUS, as Jupiter. Statue found at Lanuvium; Vatican, Rotunda, No. 550.

had insinuated into his mind mistrust of the virtue of his wife; and one day, after having in court sentenced an adulteress, at table during supper when flushed with wine, he let slip the threat that his marriage experiences had been unfortunate, but that having punished one false wife, he would find occasion to punish another.

Meeting Britannicus in a passage of the palace, he clasped him in his arms, and said to him, 'Be soon a man, and then you can punish certain offences.'

He resolved to give to Britannicus the manly habit before he had reached the proper age, as he was grown tall, like himself; and he said, 'I do this that the Roman people may at last have a real Caesar.'

Agrippina clearly understood that Narcissus was biasing the weak mind of the failing man against her, and inspiring him with an ambition to see his own son supplant Nero. She dealt a blow at one whom she knew to be intriguing against her, Domitia Lepida, the sister of her first husband, Cn. Domitius, and the aunt of Nero. She was the daughter of Antonia, and granddaughter of Octavia, sister of Augustus;[1] was an ambitious, unscrupulous woman, and aimed at supplanting her as the guardian of Nero, in the event of the death of Claudius. 'Vehement was the contention between them,' says Tacitus, 'whether aunt or mother should acquire predominance with Nero; for Lepida laboured to engage his youthful mind by caresses and liberalities; whilst Agrippina, on the contrary, treated him with sternness and threats.'

An accusation was brought against Lepida that 'she had assailed the emperor's marriage with imprecations; that, moreover, she had disturbed the peace of Italy by neglecting to restrain the tumultuous behaviour of her bands of slaves in Calabria.' She was condemned to death, notwithstanding that every effort was made to save her by Narcissus; and Nero himself appeared to give testimony against his aunt, who had protected him in childhood: a terrible lesson of heartlessness and ingratitude, taught the boy whilst his heart was yet tender, a lesson that was to be practised in later years against his own mother, the instigator of his conduct on this occasion.

The whole story of the condemnation of Lepida is mysterious. We certainly have not got at the secret spring that brought it about. Narcissus was in league with her. Of that there can be no question, for he strained every nerve to save her, and when defeated was prostrate with despair. He had nothing to hope from the accession of Britannicus, who would certainly put him to death for his action in destroying his mother. His safety depended on the succession to the throne of Nero, but of Nero under other influence than that of his mother. This, then, seems to have been his plan: by means of whispers in the ear of the emperor, and open attacks in the circle of his acquaintance, he hoped to destroy confidence in the moral character of Agrippina, and by this

[1] So Suetonius. According to Tacitus, she was the daughter of the other Antonia.

means to obtain her fall; then Nero, under the direction of his aunt, would secure his future to Narcissus. Agrippina cut away the prop from under him, and removed her rival.

Then the confidence of Narcissus gave way. In the midst of this vast accumulation of anxieties, he was attacked with illness, and for the recovery of his health had recourse to the soft air and salubrious waters of Sinnessa.[1]

Agrippina had triumphed. Her opponent had thrown up the ball. Claudius was now completely under her domination, and she had nothing to fear. Nero was still very young, too young to govern; no doubt whatever remained as to his succession. That he had been appointed to succeed was known to all Rome. No party of any consideration, probably none at all, maintained the claims of Britannicus. Her only rival, Lepida, she had brushed out of her path, and the opponent in the palace whom she had dreaded and resisted, had withdrawn from the contest, and would never return.

Claudius began to fail rapidly in the heats of summer. When he nominated the consuls, he appointed no one to fill the office after October. At the last assembly of the senate in which he made his appearance, he earnestly exhorted his two sons, before the assembled fathers, to live in amity with each other, and he commended them, tender in years, to the care of the senate. Moreover, in the last cause he heard from the tribunal he repeated emphatically before the court: 'I am now arrived at the last stage of my mortal existence.' And those present could see in his worn and pallid appearance that the shadow of death was on him.

With regard to his death the story told by Tacitus is not to be trusted. Suetonius, who wrote much at the same time as Tacitus, has no such dramatic long-drawn tale to unfold. He tells us that though it was generally agreed that Claudius was taken off by poison, yet 'where and by whom administered remains in uncertainty.' One story was that he was poisoned whilst feasting with the priests in the Capitol; another was that the deadly potion was given him by Agrippina at his own table, in mushrooms. Nor, according to Suetonius, were the accounts alike as to how he died. Some related that he became speechless, and died about daybreak; this version is probable enough, as he had had a paralytic stroke in youth, he in all likelihood had one also in old age. Others said that he fell into a deep sleep, and that a second dose of poison was given him in water-gruel. But all was uncertain. Tacitus gives with confidence the story that has most dramatic interest:—

'It was then that Agrippina, long resolved on the deed, hastened to seize the occasion when it offered, well furnished as she was with

[1] The text says that Claudius went to Sinnessa. But this is certainly a corruption of the text. Claudius did not die at Sinnessa, but died in Rome whilst Narcissus was away in Campania, ill with the gout. Dio Cass. lx. 54.

wicked agents, and deliberated on the nature of the poison she would use; she considered that if it were sudden and instantaneous in its operation, the desperate achievement might be brought to light: if, however, she chose materials slow and consuming in their operation, then Claudius, when his end approached, having discovered the treachery, might resume his affection for his son: something of a subtle nature was therefore resolved upon, such as would disorder the brain and take time to kill.'[1] If this narrative contains any grain of truth, it is in this last indication of the condition of Claudius previous to his death,—that his mind failed, and his vital powers slowly expired.

'An experienced artist in such preparations was chosen, her name was Locusta; lately condemned for poisoning, and long reserved as one of the instruments of despotism. By this woman's skill the poison was concocted; Halotus, one of the eunuchs, was selected to administer it, his office it was to serve up the emperor's repasts and prove the viands by tasting them. In fact, all the particulars of this transaction were soon after so thoroughly known[2] that the writers of those times are able to recount how the poison was poured into a dish of delectable mushrooms, but it was not at once seen to operate, and it was uncertain whether Claudius were not stupified with the wine he had drunk; his stomach readily relieved itself. Agrippina therefore became alarmed; as her life was at stake, she thought little of the suspicion she might incur, and called in the aid of Xenophon, the physician, who was already privy to her guilty purposes. It is believed that he, as if he purposed to assist Claudius in his efforts to vomit, put a feather down his throat besmeared with deadly poison.'

This entire story is conspicuously a malignant fable. There was no necessity for a crime. Agrippina was free from all who could shake her position. The old man was rapidly failing, and he had publicly proclaimed that he had not many months more life in him. It is ridiculous to suppose that both Locusta poisoned the dish, and that also the domestic physician was brought into the plot with a second poison—and one to be administered with a feather.

With flagging powers, the emperor ate plentifully of one of the most indigestible of dishes, and one most unsuitable for his feeble condition. The natural result was that he became faint and sick; and his wife sent at once for the physician, who tickled his throat to induce vomiting. Most probably a stroke ensued, and he lay in torpor till gradually his life ebbed away.

The story was naturally fastened on and improved. It was said

[1] This is eminently characteristic of Tacitus, who proceeds to read the thoughts of those who lived several years before he was born. The death of Claudius was seven years previous to his birth.

[2] If so, how was it that Suetonius was in uncertainty? How was it that the story was allowed to get about when Agrippina was able to rid herself of her accomplices

that the deadly poison was put as stuffing into a remarkably fine and large mushroom; that Agrippina took out of the dish a small one and ate it, to encourage the old man to take the fatal plant. As naturally also was it concluded that Agrippina had sent for the physician to hasten the end of her husband, not to relieve him in his distress. Now the

FIG. 106.—AGRIPPINA MINOR. Bust in the Louvre.

facts seem to have been these: The day was October 12th, and was the festival instituted in commemoration of the return of Augustus in B.C. 19 from the provinces, and the erection of the altar of Fortuna redux. Claudius dined at the banquet of the priests on the Capitol,

and it was there that after partaking of the mushrooms he became faint, and was carried thence to the palace. This fact alone seems to preclude the probability of poison having been administered.

Claudius died at some time in the morning of October 13th,[1] but as Livia had concealed the death of Augustus till all measures had been taken to secure the succession of Tiberius, so now did Agrippina disguise the decease of Claudius till the guards had been communicated with. She bade the senate assemble, and announced to it the dangerous sickness of the emperor, and requested the consuls and priests to offer vows and prayers for his recovery. The dead man lay wrapped in light coverings on his couch. It was pretended that he was alive and had asked to be entertained. Accordingly, on this conveyed request, dancers and buffoons were introduced, who capered and cut their jokes in the presence of the corpse, to the beating of a drum, and the tinkle of bells. In a room hard by, Agrippina had gathered about her the children of Claudius, Britannicus and his sisters, Octavia and Antonia, and there retained them, weeping and apparently heart-broken at her loss. Again and again she clasped Britannicus to her heart, and sobbingly called him 'the image of his dear lost father,' and 'her only comfort in her sorrow.'

The day had been designated by the soothsayers as one of desolation and ill-omen, with the exception of the hour of noon. According to the general opinion, Agrippina retained Britannicus till Nero had been proclaimed. Meanwhile, bulletins were sent out every hour to the senate to announce some amendment in the condition of the sick man, and hot compresses were carried into his room and applied to his body. Every gate of the palace was guarded by the soldiery, and no one was admitted within.

Suddenly, at noon, the gates were thrown open, and Nero stepped forth, attended by Burrhus, commander of the praetorian guard, who at once advanced to the cohort that kept watch in the outer court of the palace. He announced to the soldiers the decease of the prince, and presented to them his adopted son and chosen successor. Nero was received with shouts of joy, placed in a litter, and borne to the camp. Here and there a voice was raised for Britannicus, but it met with no response. In the camp Nero addressed the praetorians and made them promises of a largess equal to what had been given them by the late emperor, his father,[2] whereupon with loud cries he was saluted as imperator. The senate followed the lead of the praetorians. The consent of the legions in the provinces was received not long after.

But Nero knew to whom he owed the throne, and when in the evening he returned to the palatine, and the tribune asked the new emperor for the watchword, he gave him 'The best of mothers.'

[1] So perhaps; but the author of the *Ludus de Morte Claudii* says that he died just after noon.

[2] About £150 apiece.

That same night Agrippina despatched a messenger to Sinnessa to announce her triumph to Narcissus. He accepted his defeat and committed suicide.

Strange does it seem, but at the same time it is comforting to see, in the midst of this storm of dark passion the lighting up of a gleam of new hope: in the Epistle of S. Paul to the Romans, the Apostle salutes the faithful 'that be of the household of Narcissus.'

PORTRAITS OF CLAUDIUS.

'Claudius appears in the extant busts and statues as a man of between 55 and 60, usually with dignified expression, occasionally, however, with one of vacancy, even of stupidity. He has a flat skull, hair flowing forward, a broad furrowed brow, with a vertical fold in the middle, dull eyes, with fleshy brows drawn upwards towards the root of the nose, whose swelling muscle covers the upper eyelid. A straight, somewhat blunt, nose; a broad, well-moulded mouth; a weak chin, which often sinks into the throat without any decided line of demarcation; a thick neck and protruding ears. That there should be artistic modification is self-evident, and this is specially the case in regard to the degree of expression, or force of will indicated. Whereas some heads, as the colossal one in the Braccio Nuovo (No. 3), convey an impression, not indeed of a man remarkable for energy and intelligence, but of one thoroughly dignified and of sound abilities; others, on the other hand, bear the stamp of exhaustion and dissatisfaction, not easily distinguishable from that of old age; in others, again, that intellectual deficiency is perceptible which historians attribute to him, or there may be traced an acquired stupidity produced by excess of wine.'[1]

The resemblance of Claudius to his father is remarkable, if the bust in the Capitoline Museum be Drusus, but his father had a better developed forehead, more firmly arched and better moulded eyebrows, and a chin that was split in the middle. This divided chin indeed is indicated slightly in some of the busts, but it was never in Claudius as peculiar a feature as in his father. Both had a ring or crease formed from the nostrils, reaching under the chin, such as we encounter again in Trajan.

The glandular swellings of the throat, due to the scrofulous condition of Claudius, are noticeable in the busts, and these are not found in those of Drusus.

There is almost invariably a distressed, puzzled expression in the face, which is not absent even when Claudius is deified and invested with the attributes of Jupiter.

[1] Bernoulli, *Römische Ikonographie*, ii. p. 245.

1. Indeed the great statue in the Vatican, of Claudius, with wreath of oak leaves, the eagle of Zeus at his side, found at the ancient Lanuvium in 1865, provokes a laugh; the statue is that of a god, and the face that of a very puzzle-headed man, dazzled by the light into which he strives to look, and with a comical effort to appear dignified. (Fig. 106.)

2. The Otricoli colossal head in the Vatican is very interesting; it has a frown, very different from that of Caius. The frown of Caligula is that of sullenness, it is the frown of menace. That of Claudius is indicative, like that of Tiberius, of inability to endure a glare of light, of short-sightedness. In this bust the eyebrows are cut much sharper and bolder than usual, but it must be remembered it was not intended to be looked at from the point of view at which it is now exhibited, but was on a colossal statue planted on a pedestal, and looked up to, when the effect would be very different. (Fig. 103.)

3. The colossal statue in the Lateran, that came from the theatre of Cervetri, resembles another colossal bust, No. 18, in the Braccio Nuovo of the Vatican, and is slightly idealised.

4. The bust in the Capitoline Museum differs somewhat from the rest, but there is, I think, no reason to dispute its being rightly attributed.

5. The colossal bust at Naples, falsely named Galba, came from the Farnese collection. The nose is new. (Fig. 96.)

6. The bronze statue in the same gallery from Herculaneum was found along with a dedicatory inscription, but is poor as a portrait.

7. A statue larger than life at Turin, the head crowned with oak leaves, badly restored. It was found at Susa.

8. The statue in the Louvre, found at Gabii, is undoubtedly intended for Claudius.

9. Another there from the Campana collection is less tampered with than most of the pieces of sculpture from that collection, but as a portrait is not of much importance.

Another statue in the same gallery is a Campana fabrication.

10. A fine statue of Claudius in civil dress, in the Vatican, Braccio Nuovo, No. 117 (see Fig. 90).

11. A bronze bust in the Louvre with laurel crown; the nose pointed; the face shorter than usual; its genuineness as an antique is questionable.

12. A fine bust, full of character, in the Brunswick Museum, almost certainly taken from life. Engraved in full and profile by Bernoulli, Taf. xviii. (Fig. 92.)

13. A statue, half naked, heroic, in the Chiaramonti Gallery, No. 591. The head does not belong to the statue.

14. Seated statue found at Herculaneum (Fig. 89). The head is either a make-up, or is modern, and this must not be relied on as a portrait, but it is said to have been modelled after an antique bust.

15. Youthful bust in the Capitoline Museum, Sala delle Colombe, No. 58. Ears stuck forward; in good preservation, but the nose a restoration.

16. A statue in the Louvre, No. 2401, a youth with *bulla*, is almost certainly Claudius; the ears thrust forward, the characteristic creases round the mouth, the distressed brow, flat head and enlarged throat, are all distinctly features of Claudius. The statue is unnamed in the collection.

17. Bust in the Louvre, Penthelic marble, nose and upper lip restored. The ears stuck forward in the grotesque fashion common to most portraits of Claudius that are not idealised. No. 2442.

Of gems, the finest is the sardonyx in Windsor Castle, undoubtedly Claudius; the fleshy eyebrows, the chin falling away into the throat, the latter unduly large owing to disease, the large ears, do not admit of a question as to the identity.

The great Viennese cameo of Claudius and Messalina opposite Tiberius and Livia (the two latter idealised in deified youth), has been already noticed. A chalcedony representing Claudius full face, also at Vienna, given by Bernoulli, Taf. xxviii. 2, as an attempt at portraiture, is undeserving of consideration.

There are several good profiles on the medals of Claudius. On these the swollen neck is generally indicated. The best belong to the year A.D. 41, the year when he was proclaimed emperor.

NERO.

I.—THE EMPRESS MOTHER.

THE proclamation of Nero was followed by the death of M. Junius Silanus, proconsul of Asia, elder brother to the L. Junius Silanus, who had been betrothed to Octavia, and had committed suicide on the day of the marriage of Agrippina to her uncle. M. Silanus was a phlegmatic, amiable man, whom Caligula had called 'the golden sheep,' and neither Caius nor Claudius had entertained the smallest suspicion that he aspired to the throne, although, through his mother, Aemilia Lepida, he was descended from Augustus.[1] It was pretended at once that he had died by poison administered to him, by order of Agrippina, by two managers of the emperor's domestic revenues in Asia, a Roman knight and a freedman. How these men could have succeeded in 'administering it to the proconsul at a banquet, so openly that they could not escape detection,' is not explained. Silanus was surrounded by his own servants who were devoted to him, and had his taster to try meats before they were presented to him. The motive alleged by Tacitus for his poisoning was a talk in Rome that 'Nero had scarcely arrived at manhood, and that Silanus was of staid and mature age, of unblemished character, and of the lineage of the Caesars.' There was another brother in Rome, D. Silanus Torquatus, consul in A.D. 53, the year before the death of Claudius, but as he did not happen to die, gossip was forced to accuse Agrippina of killing the brother who was in Asia, and the gossipers to wonder that she should spare the Silanus under her hand.

A.U.C. 807.
A.D. 54.
Aet. 17.

Agrippina was now at the height of her ambition: her son was emperor, though a boy of seventeen, and she was regent. Nero was an amiable, yielding, and affectionate boy, loving his mother, but fearing her more than he loved her. His eyes were blue, his hair light, and he had inherited something of the Julian beauty, so that at this period he may have seemed, as Seneca describes him, 'a young Apollo.' But his neck was short, his brow low, and there was not in him the promise of height that there was in Britannicus, the scion of a tall race. He was

[1] He was born the year that Augustus died, and was therefore aged forty. Aemilia Lepida was daughter of Julia minor, by her husband L. Paullus, and Julia minor was granddaughter of Augustus.

short-sighted, and this occasioned a contraction of his brows, especially when looking at a distant object. Later on he wore a polished emerald as an eye-glass.

His intellectual abilities were small, but he had a remarkably good memory. Not only did he readily learn by heart the Latin and Greek speeches written for his delivery, but he also knew nearly every one of the knights by name. His education had been neglected by his aunt Lepida, and when he was taken in hand by Seneca, the philosopher

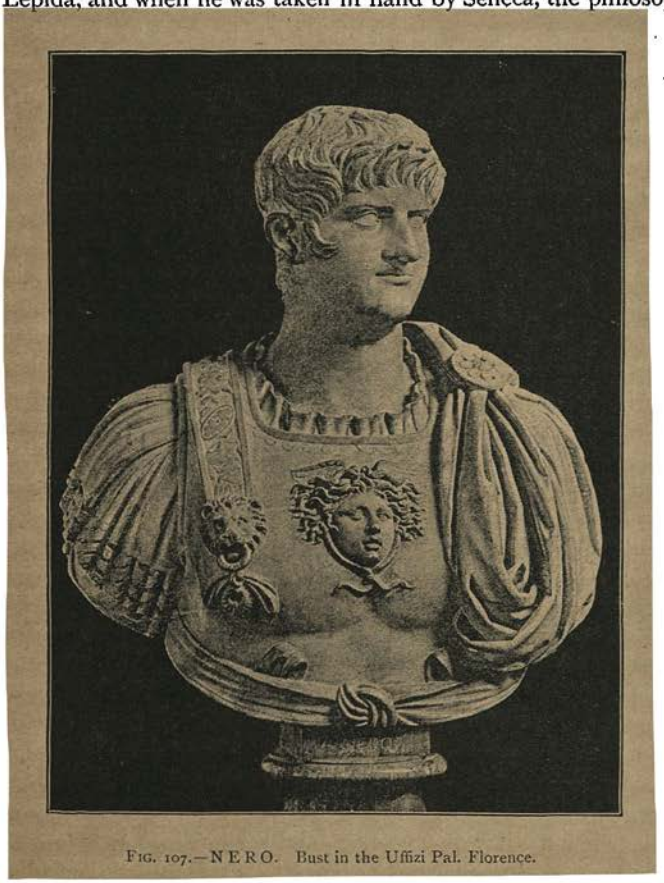


FIG. 107.—NERO. Bust in the Uffizi Pal. Florence.

found that he lacked application, and was entirely without taste for studies graver than music and poetry. Nero's very first act as emperor was to summon to his court the singer Terpnus; and turning with impatience from the study of philosophy, he devoted himself to singing, dancing, painting, sculpture, and the composition of verses. He moreover took enthusiastically to chariot-driving.

For the first five years of his reign he did not trouble himself about

domestic or foreign affairs, leaving these to the hands of his ministers, and threw himself with ardour into the cultivation of the arts.

At first, to keep up appearances, he submitted to the discharge of certain not too exacting formalities. He delivered a somewhat extravagant panegyric on the deceased emperor at his funeral, written for him by Seneca, who was already engaged on his *Farce on the Death of Claudius Caesar*, and he made a speech, composed for him by the same man, before the senate, in which he offered the fairest promises of good and liberal government. Indeed he suffered Seneca to stuff the speech with all his own principles, and he accepted it and stamped it with his authority, by speaking it unaltered before the conscript fathers, who heaped on him in return every honour at their command.

Belonging to the early days of Nero, to Nero as a child, says Viktor Rydberg, we have several busts and statues. 'One of the latter, small, in toga of about the age of eight years, is in the National Museum at Naples. A strange face it has, the features have in them something more childish than the years. Brow and eyes have a dreamy look of precocious sensibility. By the side of this is seen a bust of Nero at the age of fifteen or sixteen. No one ever looked out into the world with more cheerful glance than did this youth. Enjoyment of life is visible in every feature, brightened rather than subdued by the dreamy cloud that hangs over the eyes. But the brow is open, the cheeks are fresh and full, the mouth is smiling, the whole aspect simple and marked with confidence in the future that was to realise his rosy dreams; and yet studying that face one is constrained to admit that it is far from inspiring in others the same confidence. The small upcurled upper-lip speaks of the aesthetic epicure, and of something worse. Put beside this bust of Nero one of the many we have of the young Marcus Aurelius, and we see the contrast at once. In the face of the latter, even as a child, there are thought, sincerity, and under its sadness a promise of light; in the face of the child Nero, lurking behind its joyous smile, is a threat of darkness.'

Having no inclination for the duties of government, Nero cheerfully suffered others to relieve him of them, and there were those at hand ready to do so: the empress-mother, Seneca, Burrhus, and some of the freedmen. To them it is due that during the first five years of the reign of Nero so much was done to improve the movement of the machine of state, to restore at least a show of liberty to the senate, and to reduce the burdens that weighed on the people. These five years of their direction of affairs were afterwards characterised by the emperor Trajan as the happiest period of Rome under the rule of all the sovereigns.

And they were the happiest in the life of Nero, for he was in the full vigour of youth, his mind untroubled by disease, and his conscience unburdened by crime. He put from himself, and put upon those

whom he frankly admitted to be better able to discharge them, all the obligations attaching to his position, whilst he drank to the dregs the cup of pleasure offered to his lips. His years of adolescence were years of wild oats sowing, and he must not be judged too harshly for his follies at this period. He was but a boy, and he knew himself to be a prince. He was surrounded by flatterers of his own age, and he had not the moral or mental capacity to subjugate his love of pleasure to a sense of duty.

When dusk closed in he was accustomed to draw on a felt cap—the badge of an emancipated slave—or a fur hood such as was worn by the peasantry, to hitch on a sham beard, clothe himself in old garments, and thus disguised, along with his comrades of like age and humour—Otho, of noble Etruscan race, Senecio, a freedman's son, Petronius, director-in-chief of the imperial pleasures, and others of like kidney—to leave the palace and the better quarters of the city and to rollick in the suburbs, frequent the lowest taverns, and commit all kinds of disorders in the streets. Under the cover of night, a full purse in hand, this prince Hal of the old world gave small hopes of recovery from his early dissipations. The trophies of these expeditions: torn clothes, carried off in a scuffle with women in the street; bottles and jugs, stolen from public-houses; broken fountain-nozzles, wrenched-off shop signs, were conveyed in triumph to the palace, and were then given away or were sold by auction, among the servants of the court, and the money they realised was divided among the heroes of the adventure.

Relying on their strength or their numbers, this party of young rascals cudgelled the watchmen, way-laid men returning from a guild meeting and threw them into the sewers. Sometimes, indeed, the imperial party got off worst, and returned to the palace beaten black and blue, and with scratched faces. Pliny has preserved to us the receipt for the salves used by the emperor and his companions on the morning after these frays, for rubbing on their wounded bodies, or for disguising the marks of the cudgels on their faces.

A scuffle among the people was as much a delight to Nero as it had been to his uncle Caius. He withdrew the guards from the theatres and circus, where hitherto they had maintained order, so that the excitable people might come to blows in their partisanship for favourite actors or rival colours. The emperor on such occasions was concealed in a box above the proscenium, and when the antagonists began to pelt one another with stones, or knock each other about with the legs of benches, he would throw like weapons among them. On one such occasion he cut open the head of a praetor. His nocturnal rambles were brought to an end by his being beaten till he was nearly dead by a senator for some insolence shown to his wife.

The fancy for driving gradually gained the upper hand. Even when a child he had a little ivory chariot with horses as a toy to

thrust along on the polished surface of the marble table; but he speedily got beyond such toys, and drove four horses abreast. At first he practised in the palace gardens, but when he became fairly adept, he gave an exhibition of his powers before a great crowd in the circus, Maximus, one of the freedmen, dropping a napkin as a sign for him to start, in the place where the magistrates were wont to give the signal.

His love for horses had been manifest from early childhood. Caius, his uncle, it will be recalled, had the same passion. His tutors were obliged to forbid his 'horse talk' as he seemed to have no other object of interest. On one occasion, as a boy, he was overheard lamenting to his fellow-pupils the fall of a charioteer of the green faction, who was dragged about the circus at the tail of his chariot and severely injured. His tutor overheard him, and, thinking it unworthy of a prince to feel pity for a mere slave, he reprimanded him for his ill-placed compassion. Nero endeavoured to turn the rebuke by pretending that he was talking of Hector.

Nero remained all his life an enthusiast for horse-racing. He rewarded the old chariot-drivers when past work with mantles of honour and pensions. The trainers became so assured that they might exact what price they liked for their services, that they organised the first strike on record. As the praetor, Aulus Fabricius, refused to pay the extortionate prices they demanded, they withheld their horses, and he endeavoured to amuse the people with dogs harnessed to the chariots. But even so, he could only race the white and red favours against each other. He was unable to send the dark green and the blue into the racecourse, either because he could not sweep together a sufficiency of dogs, or because he could not get hold of the racing chariots. Then Nero, who favoured the green, interfered, and appointed a fixed price at which the trainers were bound to furnish horses, men, and vehicles for the circus.

The frivolity, the incapacity of Nero to rise to a perception of the duties of his position, were a disappointment to his mother. She reproached him, and that in harsh terms. He had a yielding nature, and had obeyed her as a child with unquestioning readiness. Possibly she lacked tact in her treatment of him, but his was not a nature over which she could hope to rule for long, however carefully she managed him. For his was a limited intelligence, and there was an absence of independent force of will, so that he was certain to become the prey of such advisers as most flattered his vanity. Vanity was his ruling characteristic, and his companions had but to hint to him that he, the lord of the world, was governed by his mother, to impel him to resent her authority. A breach was inevitable. This Agrippina could not believe. She had before her the history of Tiberius and Livia, their position analogous to that of her own son and herself, but she shut her eyes to the warning contained in that story, and when the rupture occurred it took her completely by surprise.

Although the young emperor did his best to exhibit in public his respect for his mother and the unity of hearts that reigned between them, it could not escape the observation of the watchful that two different currents of interest ran below the apparently placid surface. On one side stood Agrippina, haughty, relying on the services she had rendered her son, on his duty to her as a mother, and on that implicit obedience which he had hitherto exhibited. On the other side stood Seneca and Burrhus, the tutors she herself had given to Nero, who had now risen from their position, Seneca to be the counsellor of his former pupil, the framer of his speeches, and director of his policy in all internal affairs; Burrhus was minister of war. Both these men were in full accord with each other. Pallas still retained the ministry of finances, and he naturally stood on the side of his patroness. The Roman nobility were envious of the wealth of Pallas, and considered him haughty because he gave his servants their directions in writing, therein following the example of Augustus. But this was part of his methodical habits, which had made him an admirable financial administrator, and had filled the treasury, so that on the accession of Nero the most copious bounties could be given to the soldiery and people without exhausting it.

Following the example of his predecessor, Nero assembled the senate in the imperial library adjoining the temple of the Palatine Apollo, of which a few graceful pillars remain upright. This great hall was adorned with statues of the most famous orators and writers; and into this Agrippina had a door opened, behind which, hidden by an embroidered curtain, she could hear what was debated. Nero rarely troubled the senate with his presence, and that being the case, Agrippina deemed it important to be aware of what was being transacted. But the fact that she was present, though concealed, angered the fathers, and she was constrained in silence to hear many a covert reference to her ambition and pride that made her ears tingle, and to find that measures, on the passing of which she had set her heart, were rejected. The question had been mooted in the senate during the reign of Claudius whether advocates should receive pay from their clients, and when the senate proposed forbidding the practice, Claudius, with good sense, had interfered and named a moderate price as their remuneration. This measure was again proposed, and although Agrippina strongly insisted that to reverse the decision of her late husband was an insult to his memory, the fathers carried the point against her wishes.

Finally an incident occurred which showed to the empress-mother that the rival party was gaining the upper hand. An embassy from Armenia arrived in Rome to solicit the interference of the prince in the distracted condition of the country. Agrippina announced that she would be present at the reception at the side of her son. Such a proceeding was unheard of, and the conscript fathers were aghast at the introduction of such a precedent. Seneca alone preserved his calmness. A

word from him induced the young emperor to rise from his throne as his mother entered, descend the steps and meet Agrippina as she advanced up the hall, and with her to leave the assembly, and adjourn the reception till another day.

From this moment the ministers contrived to stop all interference of Agrippina in the affairs of state. They had everything thenceforth their own way, and did not abuse their opportunities. Nero did not interfere. The business of the government was distasteful to him, unless it involved a bit of stately ceremonial. Two accusations of high treason brought before him he refused to have gone into. When he was brought an order for the execution of a highway robber, and his signature was required, 'Alas!' said he, 'why was I ever taught to write?'

If at any time, urged by his mother, or by Burrhus and Seneca, he really engaged himself in the affairs of state, it was to commit some such folly as he was nearly guilty of one day when with a dash of the pen he proposed to release the whole empire from all indirect taxes and duties. But he seems to have entertained a certain measure of desire to deal justly, when it fell to him to pronounce judgment in a cause brought before his tribunal. Unlike Claudius, he would not deliver it off-hand, but took away with him all the minutes to consider them in private, probably to submit them to a competent adviser. Almost certainly at the instigation of Seneca, he recalled and reinstated Plautius Lateranus, who having been involved in the fall of Messalina, had been degraded and banished.

Meanwhile the day of the ruin of Agrippina's power approached. Salvius Otho and Claudius Senecio, 'two handsome lads, first of all unknown to his mother, and then, in spite of her opposition, had insinuated themselves into the good graces of the young prince,' and acted as his evil genii. Seneca and Burrhus supposed that Nero would weary of his boyish pranks, and settle down as he grew older. Both they and his mother represented to him the impropriety of his conduct, and he assumed a penitential air and promised amendment, but when their backs were turned forgot his undertaking. His youthful companions constantly dinned into his ear that it was not fitting for him to endure reproof. 'Why do you consider these people? Do you not know that you are emperor, and that it is their place to obey you, and not yours to submit to them?'

A.U.C. 808. A.D. 55. Aet. 18.

At last it came to this, says Dion, that he prided himself in setting himself against his mother's advice, and showing no respect whatever for the admonitions of Seneca and Burrhus.

But the standard of morality set before his pupil by Seneca was not high. 'Be courteous and moderate,' he enjoined. 'Shun cruelty and rapine; abstain from blood.' And with a prince pleased with his popularity, such advice was not hard to practise. 'Compensate yourself with the pleasures of youth without compunction,' was Seneca's further

exhortation; 'amuse yourself, but hurt no man.' Such sanction for licence was readily followed, and when occasion came to practise restraint from blood, it was disregarded. Seneca showed little knowledge of human nature when he gave such counsel. The plan of Seneca and Burrhus was to govern Nero by winking at his youthful errors, and they justified to themselves their tolerance of his follies and faults by the assurance that they might by this means save him from plunging into vices more odious and more fatal.

Nero had never cared for his wife, Octavia, forced on him for state reasons, and though she was young, and of approved virtue, he took a violent dislike to her. He and Britannicus had not been on good terms, and some of his dislike for the unfortunate epileptic half-brother extended to the sister. Nero was eighteen when his heart was excited by a real passion; and the person by whom his affections were engaged was a Greek freedwoman, named Acte. So strong and hot was his passion that he suborned men of consular rank to swear she was of royal descent, and declared his intention of divorcing Octavia and marrying her. Seneca and Burrhus had watched the growth and progress of this first love, and were disposed to wink at it. They would prevent Nero committing such a folly as marrying the girl, and they were persuaded that as the passion was so hot it would speedily burn itself out. But when the fact of this attachment reached the ears of Agrippina, she lost all control over herself; her Julian pride rose up in disgust at the idea of association of one of the divine race with a girl who had been a slave. A violent scene ensued. The indignant empress-mother forgot all her prudence, and poured forth a torrent of contemptuous words. What! was a freedwoman to share with her the love of her son! A serving-maid to be her daughter-in-law. She completely overshot her mark. The abuse she heaped upon Acte, upon her son, made him stubborn and wounded his self-esteem. Historians have not recorded anything against Acte; she never employed her power over Nero to obtain the ruin of an enemy. She was modest and unpresuming, and her love for Nero was sincere; and when he turned from her, after she had possessed his heart for four years, she sank into profound melancholy.[1] Moreover, the charm of the forbidden, and the secrecy of the attachment, exercised their power over the youthful and inexperienced prince.

Nero revenged himself for the slight put on his favourite, and the violence of language employed towards himself, by disgracing Pallas, relieving him of his office as treasurer, and dismissing him from court. This blow was keenly felt by the empress-mother, who was now thoroughly alive to the fact that her control over her son was slipping from her. She changed her conduct, threw aside her pride, and stooped to solicit the alienated affections of her son. She offered to

[1] *Octavia*, v. 194-6.

withdraw her opposition to Acte, but Nero had been for some time chafing at the authority exercised over him by Agrippina, and he caught at the opportunity for establishing his independence, and in so doing was sustained by Seneca and Burrhus, and encouraged by Otho and Senecio.

Reproaching herself for having for a moment stooped to her son, Agrippina chafed against her loss of power, and cast about wildly for some means of regaining it. Nero had no wish to come to an open breach with his mother, though resolved to withdraw from her dictation; and he made several attempts to soothe her resentment, but was met with rebuff. An instance has found its way into Tacitus. The emperor occupied a portion of the palace in which was the cabinet where were preserved the state garments and jewelry that were worn by the consorts of the Caesars. With purpose to give his mother a pleasure, Nero selected from the store one of the most magnificent suits, and some of the most valuable gems, and sent them as a present to Agrippina. But instead of receiving thanks, he was informed that his mother regarded the offer as an insult that had been premeditated; that he had sent her the trinkets as a hint to keep her hands off what she considered properly belonged to herself. Intermediaries exaggerated what she had said, and excited the dissatisfaction of Nero.

To increase her irritation, a charge of high treason was brought against Pallas, and although Seneca himself defended him, and he was acquitted, it was a significant sign of the turn of the tide against her that men should dare to bring her favourite before the courts. She completely lost her head, and launched forth into threats against her ungrateful son. She declared that she would betake herself with Britannicus to the camp of the Praetorians, and bid them choose between Nero on one side with his tutor Seneca and the cripple-handed Burrhus, and on the other herself, the daughter of Germanicus, and Britannicus, the son of the late emperor. The threat was as idle as it was foolish. Burrhus was commander of the Praetorians, and the men were hardly likely to take part against their chief officer, and against a young emperor who had favoured them in every way, and had given them no cause for resentment and desire for a change. But the threat —if ever made—we have the authority of Tacitus alone for it—alarmed Nero, and we are told to believe that thereupon he resolved to relieve himself of a possible danger by the removal of Britannicus, as Caius had removed Tiberius Gemellus.

To the period immediately preceding the breach with his mother belong the medals and gems that bear the busts of Nero along with his mother. On these she appears as an elderly woman. In A.D. 55 she was in her fortieth year. On a coin of Nero and Agrippina she appears much the same as on one where she is represented along with Claudius, with elaborately curled hair, gathered behind into a plait that

hangs down to her shoulders. As portraits, these heads cannot be accepted, so widely do they differ from those which represent her head alone; the character of the nose, indeed the whole facial outline, being different. It is, however, possible that she may have lost her teeth, which would have materially changed the contour of her face.

II.—THE DEATH OF BRITANNICUS.

NERO entered on the second year of his reign, and already the accord between himself and his mother was broken. We find in Tacitus, in Suetonius, and Dio, that he is charged with the murder of his comrade in youth and half-brother, the unhappy Britannicus. The story is given with great detail by Tacitus, and Suetonius adds particulars that serve to render it one of the most dramatic and terrible incidents in the history of the Caesars. We will take the story as told, and afterwards see whether much reliance can be placed on it.

A.U.C. 808.
A.D. 55.
Aet. 18.

According to Tacitus, Agrippina in her fury had told Nero to his face that he owed the throne to her, and that if he did not return to his submission she would deprive him of it and give it to Britannicus. This was at the very beginning of January 55. On February 13th Britannicus would be fifteen and have passed out of childhood by the assumption of the *toga virilis*. Only a few days before, when in December the Saturnalia had been celebrated with much merriment in the palace, and the offices had been distributed by lot among the young people, Nero had been appointed king, and he had set Britannicus as a forfeit in the game to stand in the middle of the room and recite some verses. Britannicus did so, and the lines he chose were applicable to his own position as a prince thrust into the background and despoiled of his rights. His recitation had provoked applause and tokens of sympathy, and aroused the jealousy of Nero. Upon this came the threats of Agrippina, and they worked in his mind, and he resolved on the death of Britannicus.

As he could allege no crime against his half-brother, he dared not command his execution openly. Locusta the poisoner was still in custody, and the tribune Julius Pollio had charge of her. He entered into communication with the woman, and obtained from her a poison, which he induced the tutors of Britannicus to administer to their pupil. It failed in its effect. Thereupon Nero angrily rebuked the tribune and the poisoner with having played him false. Nero even beat the woman till she pleaded that she had given the dose in a small amount, so that the boy might not die suddenly and thus provoke suspicion. Further she promised, that if Nero desired it, a more deadly potion should be prepared. 'I am not afraid of the Julian law

FIG. 108.—BRITANNICUS. Statue in the Lateran.

(against poisoners),' scoffed he. Accordingly, under his own eyes, in a room adjoining his bed-chamber, the deadly mixture was concocted. It was tried first on a goat. Its death-struggles lasted five hours. Too long for Nero. The poison was again submitted to the fire, and tried next on a pig that died on the spot. Nero was now satisfied. That evening at table the emperor sat with his mother and his wife. At another table were Britannicus and his friends. Britannicus asked for wine. The taster was handed a goblet and put it to his lips; it was scalding hot so that he touched it only, and then handed it to the prince. Britannicus declined it and asked to have the wine cooled; then the poison was dropped into the goblet with the water, and the lad without a thought of mistrust drained the cup. He fell from his stool in convulsions on the floor. Terror filled all present. Several, who did not understand that this was planned, retired. But others suspecting, if not knowing, that the death of the prince had been schemed, fixed their eyes on Nero, who, without rising from his pillow on which he lounged, and apparently indifferent to what had happened, said, 'This is one of his usual epileptic fits, from which he has suffered from infancy.'

The dying prince was conveyed out of the dining-room, and after a brief silence the interrupted conversation was resumed. The alarm and horror of Agrippina, however, were so marked that it was clear to all that she was guiltless of the crime; whilst the wretched Octavia was forced to control every token of emotion at her brother's condition and betray neither by swelling bosom nor trickling tear that she was stirred by grief or dismay.

That same night the body of the last male issue of the Claudian race was conveyed to the Field of Mars, there to be consumed with all haste. Purple spots had appeared on the body, and Nero had them chalked over, but as the corpse was being conveyed to its pyre the pouring rain washed off the white pigment and betrayed the tokens of crime. The people, driven from the streets by the floods that the Sirocco wind charged with moisture sent down, considered these rains as a token of divine vengeance. By an edict Nero justified the hurrying of the obsequies, alleging that it was an institution of his ancestors 'to withdraw from sight the bodies of such as died prematurely, and not to lengthen the solemnity by encomiums and by processions.'

The estates of Britannicus which devolved to himself, Nero gave away freely to men of rank and position, only thereby deepening the suspicion entertained against himself of having caused his brother's death.

About this time appeared the treatise by Seneca on Clemency, in which he praises the gentleness of the prince's rule, and his abstention from acts of violence. The question forces itself on one's attention: Did Seneca, in his desire to strengthen and secure the throne of his

pupil, sanction, if not instigate, the murder, or did he endeavour to disguise it when committed without his knowledge, or lastly—was any murder committed at all?

Now, in the first place, we see no evidence of Nero's position being in the least endangered by the younger prince. It is more than probable that Tacitus feigned the threat of Agrippina in order to give a plausibility to his tragic story of a crime which he felt was without motive. There is certainly no limit to the extravagance of threat to which a furious woman will launch out, but the very extravagance and absurdity of the threat of Agrippina, if ever made, deprived it of every element that could disquiet. She—the mother of the emperor—would present the son of the rival she had overthrown to the homage of the soldiery who were completely devoted to their commander, and that commander was her own son's minister of war and adviser! If the absurd threat were ever made, in the next moment of coolness Agrippina would herself acknowledge its absurdity.

The only other motive alleged was that Britannicus had, in the Saturnalian games, when playing forfeits, recited some lines that were thought to apply to his own condition! Verily, a notable reason for his destruction!

We must receive the stories of poison with the greatest mistrust. Any inexplicable death, or any death that was thought to be advantageous to some parties, was attributed to poison. In this instance, as in that of Claudius, two attempts are said to have been made, and in both the first attempt fails. Britannicus had been subject to epileptic fits from childhood, and his fall from table has all the appearance of having been what Nero said it was—one of his ordinary attacks. The story of the purple spots chalked over, and the rain washing them off so that the spectators in the dead of night in pouring rain could see them, arose, if true, from the fact that in falling from table, Britannicus bruised himself, and these bruises were disguised, and then revealed by the rain.

For four years after this Nero remained an amiable harmless prince; it is almost incredible that a lad only just aged eighteen—his birthday was in December and the death of Britannicus occurred in January—can have contrived and carried out with diabolical ingenuity such a hideous fratricide, and retained his composure through it, and then have relapsed into his amiability again. When, four or five years later, he became a matricide and a monster of iniquity, then he was accused also of the death of his brother, and all the details were given with a minuteness which it does not seem possible could have been arrived at had a crime been actually committed.

Seneca, moreover, must have been the most despicable of men had he written his treatise on Clemency with the knowledge that he whom he praised therein was stained with his brother's blood.

We may perhaps gain some notion of what the poisons of the old world were when we know what was esteemed as a sovereign antidote against them—this was the famous Mithridaticum, which had been discovered by Mithridates, king of Pontus, and was that wherewith he fortified himself against the subtle attempts of his enemies. The recipe was found among his papers by Cn. Pompeius, and is preserved for us by Pliny. It was fully believed in to the end of the Middle Ages. We are told that Agrippina secured herself against poison which she thought her son was having administered to her, and laughed at his attempts, because she took an antidote, and that doubtless was the Mithridaticum. Here is the recipe: 'Take two dry walnuts, as many figs, and twenty dried leaves of rue, add a little salt, and take on an empty stomach. On the day this dose has been administered no poison can have any effect.' This far-famed antidote is nothing more than a mild febrifuge.

We know how in the Middle Ages the Jews were accused of poisoning the wells whenever typhoid or typhus fever broke out. And when, in the times of the emperors, and before that, under the Republic, men and women perished by disorders the physicians did not understand, or could not cure, all was explained when the word poison was whispered.

In the matter of the death of Britannicus, the words of Dio are deserving of being weighed: 'Men spread reports after their own evil fancies and demoralisation, and *asserted as true what was only possible, and as certain what was merely probable.*'

III.—GROWING ESTRANGEMENT.

After the death of Britannicus, Agrippina drew to her the slighted and lonely Octavia. Each had a grievance against Nero; each could complain of neglect. He, indeed, made presents to his mother of some of the villas that had belonged to Britannicus, 'but her resentment was not to be abated by any acts of munificence. She attached herself more closely to Octavia, held frequent conferences with her confidants in secret; with more than her inherent avarice she scraped together money from every source, as if to form a reserve fund; she courteously entertained the tribunes and centurions, and honoured the names and virtues of the few nobles who remained, as if she were seeking a party and a leader to support her,' so says Tacitus. That she should collect money was perhaps not marvellous, when Nero was throwing his about with both hands. The story is told of him, as it is also told of Antonius, that he had ordered a sum of two and a half million denarii to be given to his Greek secretary, Doryphorus. Agrippina, thinking the sum beyond all measure, spread it out on the table before him. 'I did not think it was

so little,' said Nero, and ordered the treasurer to pay to the secretary double the amount.

That she seemed to be forming a party when she gathered her friends about her was an insinuation of her enemies. She had nothing to gain by the dethronement of her son.

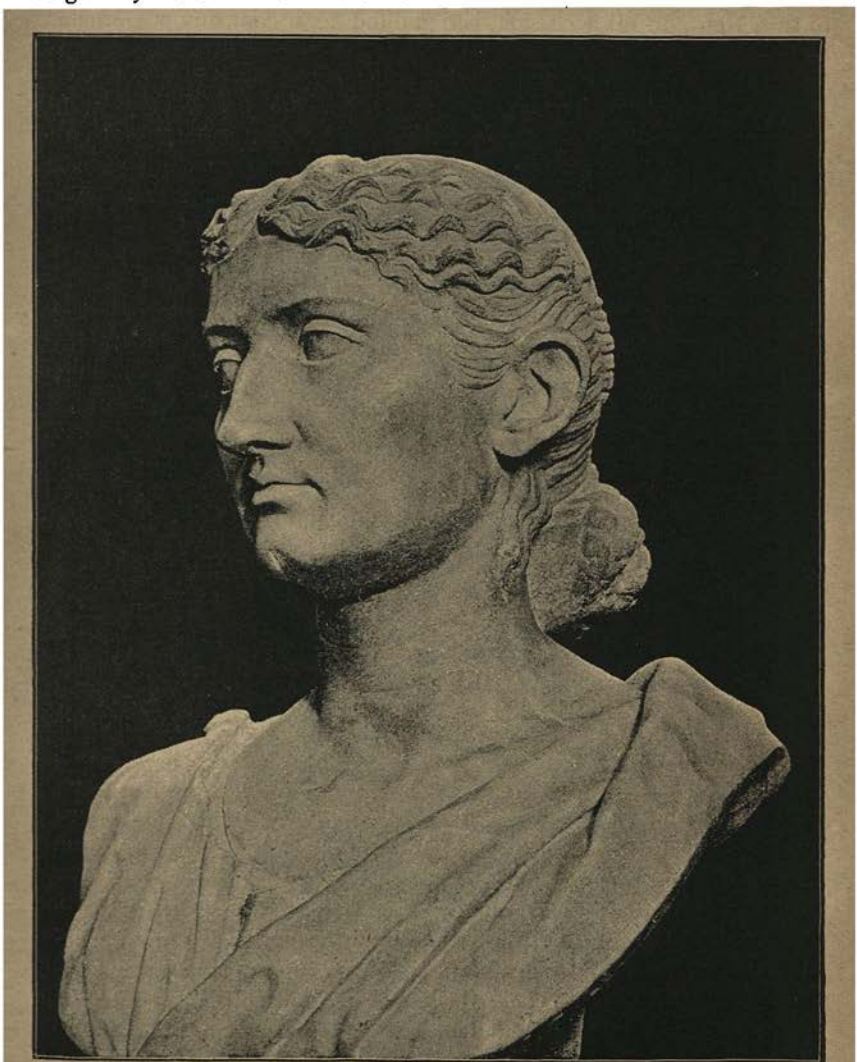


FIG. 109.—AGRIPPINA MINOR. Bust, Mus. Nat. Naples.

The empress-mother was still an important personage. Octavia had neither the ambition nor the power to assert herself. Hitherto Agrippina

had inhabited the palace along with her son and his wife, and there as a regent had held a court equal in splendour to that of Nero. Those who visited the palace paid their respects at once to the emperor and to his mother, and a detachment of the praetorians kept guard over her portion of the palace, as they had in the time of Claudius. In addition to this, Nero, on his accession, had granted her a company of Germans, to serve as a bodyguard.

Now Nero withdrew both the guard of honour and those who attended on her person, as a token that he mistrusted her influence with the soldiery. Then he ordered her to remove from his palace along with her servants and occupy the house that had been that of Antonia, her grandmother.

'Of all human things,' says Tacitus on this occasion, 'none is so unstable and transitory as the reputation of influence which depends not on its own inherent strength.' This Agrippina now experienced. None now visited her; none condoled with her, save a few ladies who were warmly attached to her, and others who went to glut their hate by the sight of her fall. Amongst those who still visited her was Junia Silana, who, at the instigation of Messalina, had been divorced by Caius Silius. Fate had driven her into the arms of Agrippina, and together they had rejoiced over the destruction of Messalina. Since then the two women had remained on most affectionate terms. An unfortunate matter now separated them. Junia Silana was wealthy—the heiress of her father—and in her time had been beautiful, but was now withered. Scandal said that her morals had been of the worst. Suddenly it was announced that the old lady was about to give her hand to a young Roman noble, Sentius Africanus. Agrippina thought it incumbent on her to interfere, and naturally the meanest motives were attributed to her for her interference. It was said that she coveted the estates of her friend, who was childless. How she could have laid claim to them on her death is by no means clear, as they were not related. She invited the young man to her and advised him in private not to marry an old woman with ugly tales clinging to her name. Africanus withdrew his suit, and from that moment Silana became the deadly enemy of her former ally, and waited her opportunity to repay her.

This opportunity now offered. Agrippina was in disfavour; she was no more to be feared for her power; her estrangement from her son was growing, and was the common talk of Rome. To revenge herself for having been bereft of her young suitor, Junia Silana suborned two of her clients, Iturius and Sabinus, to accuse the empress-mother of high-treason. Another person was drawn into the plot, Domitia Lepida, sister to Agrippina's first husband, that avaricious old lady of whom it was said she did not sell her old shoes, for she wore only such as were bought at second-hand. She had been divorced from Crispus Passienus, and he had been Agrippina's second husband. Domitia

therefore had an old grudge to avenge, and she threw herself heartily into the scheme.

Among the few remaining kinsmen of the ruling Julian house was Rubellius Plautus, son of Rubellius Blandus, to whom the Emperor Tiberius had given the princess Julia, daughter of his son Drusus. Consequently he was related on his mother's side to the Claudian, but not by blood to the Julian family. When Tacitus says that he was, he means that he might claim Augustus as an ancestor through the adoption of Tiberius into the Julian house. The story got up by the two rancorous old women was that Agrippina had planned the dethronement of her own son, and the elevation of Rubellius Plautus in his room, and that she purposed to secure his right by marrying him. Rubellius cannot have been more than a couple of years older than Nero, consequently the stab meditated by Junia Silana was a return in kind to that dealt her by Agrippina. She—an old woman—was meditating union with a youth. A freedman of Domitia, a dancer and jester named Paris, who stood in high favour with Nero, was engaged by the chamberlain of Domitia to use his best pantomimic arts to frighten Nero into belief that his throne was jeopardised.

It was late at night. Nero sat at table in his palace, where the company, flushed with wine, had protracted their revels. On the entrance of the favourite buffoon, who on such occasions was wont to spice the entertainment with his comic sayings and grotesque actions, the emperor was surprised to see that his fun had gone from him, and that he appeared agitated. On inquiry as to the reason, he learnt to his alarm that a conspiracy had been formed against him by his own mother. In the first impulse of fear, he issued orders for the immediate execution of Agrippina and of Rubellius Plautus. As he doubted whether Burrhus might not be in the plot, for he enjoyed the command of the praetorians through Agrippina, he transferred the command to Caecina Tuscus, son of his nurse. Then Seneca interfered: he allayed the alarm of the young half-tipsy prince, and made him withdraw his transfer of the command of the guards from Burrhus. The old soldier was hastily summoned to the palace. The Emperor at once informed him of the charges, and urged him to take the necessary precautions for his safety and for the punishment of the conspirators. Burrhus sought to mitigate his terrors, and succeeded so far as to obtain a postponement of the executions, but only on solemnly undertaking to decapitate the empress-mother if she were found to be really guilty. The honourable old soldier went further. He pointed out to the still frightened Nero: 'To every one liberty of defence is accorded, and this should certainly not be denied to a mother. No proper accusers have appeared,' he said; 'the only evidence we have is the assertion of one man who came from the house of a bitter enemy of the accused, and the charge was made in the midst of the night when all present

were in a condition of recklessness or maudlin stupidity, and therefore the charge was most suspicious.' Nero consented to wait till morning, and he committed the investigation to Burrhus.

Accordingly, early next day the commander of the guards betook himself to the palace of the empress-mother, and laid before her the commands of her son. He had summoned Seneca and several of the imperial freedmen to be present, that they might be witnesses of the investigation. Burrhus informed the astonished Agrippina of the nature of the accusation brought against her, named the accusers, and spoke in a peremptory and threatening tone.

The defence made by Agrippina, given to us by Tacitus, is a masterpiece of proud eloquence, and if not altogether genuine, is composed by the historian in perfect accord with her character. As, however, it is quite certain that Burrhus and Seneca would have had shorthand writers with them, it is not improbable that Tacitus took it from the official records. Agrippina, with her wonted haughtiness, answered: 'I wonder not that Silana, who never bore a child, should be a stranger to a mother's love for her son. In good truth, children are not so easily plucked out of the heart of a parent as a lover out of that of a loose woman. As for Iturius and Calvisius, they are bankrupts, and as a last resource, by undertaking this prosecution, pay back to an old woman their services, as an equivalent for the money with which she had furnished them in times past. Is it by such as these that I am to be branded with infamy, and that Caesar is brought to conceive the possibility of slaying his mother? As to Domitia, I would thank her for all the sallies of her hate, if she strove to outdo me in kindness to my boy, Nero. Now, through Atimetus, her minion, and the merry-andrew, Paris, she is framing a farce fit for the stage. Where was she, when I by my counsels obtained the adoption of her nephew and my son into the Claudian house? when I procured for him the proconsular authority and his designation to the consulship? when I advanced his cause in every way necessary for getting him the empire? Where was she, I ask? Admiring her fish-ponds at Baiae. Say—is there a man who can stand forward and charge me with practising on the guards in Rome, with tampering with the allegiance of the provinces, with luring the slaves and freedmen of the prince into treasonable practices? If Plautus or any other man were to gain supreme power, I would be the first to be brought up for judgment. When screened by my son, I am still foully charged, not with expressions that have slipped off my tongue from the vehemence of my love for him, but with all sorts of crimes.'

Her towering wrath at the falseness of the charges laid against her, her innate queenliness of aspect and of manner, powerfully affected all who heard her, and they strove to allay her panting indignation by promising that she should be brought into the presence of her son.

Her interview with Nero was characteristic of this proud and pas-

sionate woman. She would not stoop by one word to exculpate herself. In face of her son she demanded as a right the condemnation of her false accusers, and the reward of those who had stood by her. Both were granted her. The treacherous Silana was banished, Iturius and Calvisius were relegated.[1] Atimetus, the chamberlain, was executed; but the favour of the emperor preserved Paris, only to fall a victim to his cruelty nine years later. The head of the imaginary plot, Rubellius Plautus, remained unmolested. Three Roman knights were rewarded for their devotion to the empress-mother by being given governorships.

The ill fate that had attended this attempt to destroy Agrippina did not discourage another of her enemies from making a similar attempt, not indeed directly against herself, but against the once all-powerful Pallas, and the brave captain of the guards, whose intervention had saved her life in the case just related.

There was a Roman knight named Paetus, a man of the worst character, whose business it was to buy up the estates of such as had been condemned, and parcel them out and resell them in small allotments. He also raked up old debts to the treasury, and delated those who were debtors for the sake of the reward given on such occasions.

This Paetus charged Pallas and Burrhus with having formed a plan to place on the throne Cornelius Sulla, the husband of Antonia, eldest daughter of Claudius. He reckoned on the dislike Nero had for Pallas, whose colossal fortune moreover might tempt him, and on the mistrust that might have been aroused against Burrhus by his defence of Agrippina in the former accusation. But the case was manifestly false, and Nero at this time was by no means the tyrant he afterwards became. He himself required Burrhus, though accused, to take his place among the judges; Pallas was at once acquitted, and on this occasion his discretion in never having any communication with an underling except in writing stood him in good stead. Not a line of his could be produced to lend colour to the accusation of treason. Seneca pleaded the cause of the accused, and the delator was banished. Pallas survived his patroness, and died at an advanced age in A.D. 62, leaving a fortune of three hundred million sesterces (over £3,150,000), and was buried on the Tiburtine Way, on which, half a century later, the younger Pliny read the inscription that recorded the grant to him by the senate of praetorian insignia, and his decline of a further grant of money. Over this Pliny fanned himself into a fury of disgust at the baseness of the Roman senate that could decree such honours to a man of servile origin.

Sulla was acquitted; but a germ of mistrust remained in the heart of Nero, and in A.D. 57 he banished him to Marseilles on hearing rumours of fresh conspiracies of which Sulla was the head. He was a

[1] The sentence was one of mitigated banishment. The relegated were not deprived of their rights as citizens, which were lost by the exiled whilst in banishment.

dull, cold man, and not wealthy; but Nero thought that his stupidity and lack of geniality were affected. Five years later he was put to death by order of Nero.

At this time the prince had not taken any step in a direction towards cruelty. He sought the approval of the public by acts of justice and liberality. For instance, the despicable wretch, P. Suilius, who had been employed largely by Messalina as an accuser, and had caused the death of many innocent men, was now relegated to the Balearic Isles. He moreover reduced a number of burdensome charges on the people.

Probably to the period when he was one-and-twenty belongs the colossal bust in the Capitol that represents him without a beard. He rapidly attained the look and gait of a man. Somewhat later he grew a beard, then he shaved.

The bust in the Capitoline Museum, No. 15, in the room of the emperors, was placed on as tatue that has been lost. It represents him as already showing signs of fatness, and with the beginning of a double chin. The hair is long and wavy, and falls down over his brow. Only the tip of the nose has been restored. It is of Luna marble, and is of good workmanship.

There is also a bust of Nero belonging to this period that was found on the Palatine. It is chiefly curious as being almost the only ancient bust which represents a man with whiskers and shaved chin. There is another in the Museum at Naples, but not of Nero.

IV.—POPPAEA SABINA.

ALTHOUGH there existed estrangement between mother and son, yet her influence over him held him in check, and he did not proceed, as he had proposed, to divorce Octavia and marry Acte. Agrippina took care that the timid, retiring young empress should be seen by the people, and her sweet and modest character won their respect and even love.

For three or four years Acte maintained her hold on the heart of Nero, but had then to make way for a woman who exercised a terrible influence over the young prince, and thrust him on to the commission of his worst crimes. A.U.C. 811. A.D. 58. Aet. 21.

This woman was the daughter of Titus Ollius, who had been involved in the condemnation of the friends and favourites of Sejanus. Her mother was a daughter of C. Poppaeus Sabinus, who as governor of Moesia, Achaia, and Macedonia in the last years of Tiberius, had amassed a large fortune. The political career of T. Ollius had been cut short at the time when he acquired the office of quaestor; after his death, Poppaea the Elder had married a Scipio, and was considered to be one of the most beautiful women in Rome, as also one of the lightest. Her gallantries had brought about a quarrel with Messalina. She had

been engaged in the fall of Valerius Asiaticus, and had been forced by Messalina to put herself to death. From this mother, Poppaea Sabina inherited not only her transcendent beauty, but also the laxity of her principles. 'This woman,' says Tacitus, 'possessed everything but an honest mind; from her mother, who in beauty surpassed all women of her time, she derived the charms of her person and the dignity of her family; her wealth was equal to the lustre of her birth; she had a fascinating conversation, and was not deficient in wit. She observed an outward decorum, but in heart was wanton; she rarely appeared in public, and when she did she wore a veil, either because she did not want to glut eyes with her beauty, or because she thought a veil became her.'

She had been married to a Roman knight, Rufus Crispinus, to whom she had borne a son, but she was divorced from him, and then married M. Salvius Otho, the friend and confidant of the emperor.

The pains which she devoted to the preservation of her beauty by all kinds of artistic and dietetic means, the recklessness wherewith she spent her money on whatever might serve to gratify her love of splendour, were the talk of the town; and long after her death the tale went round how that on a journey she took about with her five hundred she-asses, that she might not miss her daily bath in warm asses' milk, as also that her mules were shod with gold. Also that when one day her mirror informed her that her beauty was on the decline, she had cried out: 'Let me die rather than lose my loveliness!'

Her hair was remarkable. It was of the colour of golden amber, and Nero composed verses on it. It was the envy of the Roman ladies, and set a fashion for ornaments in amber.

Otho, whom she took for her husband, was well known in Rome for his extravagance, and belonged to the *jeunesse dorée* of the capital. He had ingratiated himself with Agrippina during the reign of Claudius, by paying his addresses to one of her ladies-in-waiting, although she was of over-ripe charms. By this means he got into the court and into association with Nero, with whom he became as one in heart and soul, from the similarity of their characters and tastes, though Otho was his senior by five years. Unhappily, Otho was the prince's guide into worse things than scuffles with watchmen, and potations in low public-houses; and Nero looked up to him as a fellow who had wide experiences in the mode of enjoying life. Even the extravagance of Otho imposed on the boy, who was a novice in such matters, as neither his mother nor Claudius had cared for display, each being averse to waste. One day Nero squirted some drops of a costly essence over his friend, whereupon Otho invited him to dine at his palace on the following evening, when the same essence was discharged over all the guests at table through gold and silver pipes. What his audacity was may be gathered from an ancedote told of him, that once to strengthen an

assertion he made, he added: 'As certainly as that I shall be emperor.' 'I shall not even see you consul,' answered Nero.

Such a man suited Poppaea. Not that she was attracted by his appearance, for Otho was not handsome, he was short of stature, bandy-legged and splayfooted. At twenty-six he was bald and constrained to wear a wig, and he had no hair on his face. But he was vastly rich. His palace was crowded with treasures of art; he was the intimate friend of the emperor, and Poppaea had already resolved to use him as a stepping-stone to help her to a throne.

Among all the treasures collected in his courts his wife was the choicest, thought Otho, and when his tongue was relaxed by wine, he dilated to his friends on her beauty.

Nero was twenty-one and the world lay at his feet. He was resolved to become the possessor of this incomparable woman.

Only after long hesitation and continued evasion did Otho allow Nero a sight of his wife. Her radiant loveliness, her demoniacal coquetry took the heart of the young prince at once by storm. But Poppaea would not listen to his protests of affection. She was a married woman, she said, and loved her husband. Nero sent his servants to her, to invite her to his palace. They were not even admitted to her presence. The emperor came himself, and asked permission to make his invitation in person. But the doors remained shut, and Nero was forced to withdraw, baffled, but all the more inflamed. Then he despatched Otho as governor into Lusitania, and hoped in his absence to win the beauty. But Poppaea remained inexorable. She would be empress or naught. Repelled, dissatisfied, and glowing with passion, the young prince resolved to clear all impediments out of his way that withheld from him the object of his ardour.

The chief of these was Agrippina. Though he had deprived his mother of all interference in the affairs of State, her presence was a moral check upon his conduct, her gravity and disapproval of his frivolity a continual vexation. He had threatened, in a huff, to abdicate and retire to Rhodes. Now she stood in the way of his passion. She had been constrained to tolerate his attachment to Acte, but she resisted this new passion with all the means at her disposal. She knew of what sort was the woman who was angling so deftly for her son. And she knew also that she herself, and she alone, was the protector of Octavia.

The time was long past since he had given as watchword to the praetorians, 'The best of mothers.' He had already withdrawn the guard from her and relegated her to the palace of Antonia. He either did not visit her at all, or, if he did pay her a visit of courtesy, he filled the room with his centurions, and gave her no opportunity to reprimand him in private.

Nero had been wont, when she took the air in her litter, to accompany

it on foot; he never attended her now, and when she retired to her Tusculan or Antian villas, he sneeringly hoped that she would there find the repose for her troubled spirit that it so much needed. But he was not content with her absence; he molested her in the most coarse manner. When she was in the country, he sent people to pass and repass her villa, by road and by water, and to yell under her windows the most brutal insults, and to disturb her sleep with cat-calls. When she was in Rome he worried her by lawsuits, and accusations before the courts.

Poppaea knew that so long as Agrippina lived she would never obtain the object of her ambition. She therefore directed all her artillery against the empress-mother. She was unwearied in declaring to Nero that his throne was insecure so long as that ambitious and revengeful woman lived, that his submission to his mother was unworthy of his position. She turned all her natural wit to make Agrippina ridiculous in his eyes, and to make Nero blush that he had ever been dutiful, and was still respectful; now fanning his vanity and then his fears. She told him he was still an infant under the tutelage of his mother. 'You call yourself an emperor,' scoffed she, 'you who are not yet a free man? Were you really emperor, you would not be putting off and off our projected marriage. What! am I not beautiful, not noble enough to be your consort? Is it an objection that I have proved my fertility? or that I am devoted in heart to you? Are you afraid lest, when I am your wife, I shall expose to you how contumeliously she has treated the senate? how great is the indignation of the people against her? Let me go to the other end of the world—send me to Otho, where, afar off, I may hear of, not see, the degradation of Nero.'

The weak mind of the prince yielded to the tears and eloquence of this vile woman. 'He felt,' says Tacitus, 'as though his mother, wherever she might be, was a nightmare to him, and he resolved to kill her.'

Unhappily, Nero was surrounded by a party bitterly opposed to Agrippina, and they humoured his mood, never, perhaps, for a moment dreaming that he would proceed to actual violence; but would content himself with banishing her.

Agrippina had now no guards to protect her against the insults to which she was subjected, she had few friends who in the courts dared to stand up and defend her cause. One may imagine the despair of the proud woman, who knew but too well to whom she must attribute the humiliations to which she was now subjected. It is possible that in her indignation she may have launched forth into unconsidered expressions of reproach against the ungrateful son, and of threat against the beautiful coquette who was winding him round her finger. If so, such expressions were at once carried to the ears of Nero and

Poppaea, and those who flattered them knew how to inflame their animosity and deepen their dread of this stately and still powerful woman.

Powerful she still was—that is shown us by the resolution at which Nero and Poppaea arrived to get rid of her. All the moral strength of the old Roman character that lingered on among the upper classes of Rome held with her. They had measured the ineptitude of the new ruler, and knew that he would become the ball in the hands of such persons as could get hold of him. Under the late emperor the freedmen had held the reins of government, now they were likely to be snatched at by the dissolute youth of the circle that drank, and danced, and brawled with the shallow-pated boy who was prince. What guarantee was there that the control of affairs should remain with Burrhus and Seneca? Even these men, though opposed to the interference of Agrippina, respected her, and knew how important she was as the sole person who could hold Nero in restraint. That was why, when she was assailed, they ranged themselves on her side.

But Poppaea now had recourse to slander of the most repulsive nature, so as to alienate minds from Agrippina, for it is to this time that belongs the vile story recorded by Tacitus, Suetonius, Dio, Aurelius Victor, and alluded to also by Lucan.[1]

Have we got genuine portraits of Poppaea? Unfortunately, the medals do not help us greatly. The best is a Greek coin with Nero on the obverse. Her head on the reverse represents her with straight brow and nose almost in a line, after the Greek ideal type, a long neck, abundant hair that falls in a plat at the nape of her neck, with two tresses drawn forward, one on each side of her throat. But the portrait of Nero on this coin is not good, and we have little reason to suppose that the other likeness is better as a portrait. Moreover, it differs in profile from a small coin on which Nero and Poppaea are represented together.

[1] The calumny was as preposterous as it was false. The empress was forty-two. The purpose of the slander was obvious enough:—to hold her up to popular contempt, and to check Nero from visiting her. It is in direct contradiction with what is known of the conduct towards her of Nero at the time, who rarely saw her, and never visited her without being surrounded by his centurions. How the story originated is not hard to discover. Among the light women about the court of Nero was one, say Suetonius and Dio, curiously like Agrippina in the days of her youth and beauty. The stories of the misconduct of this girl were dexterously attached to the poor old lady by Poppaea, to serve her own ends. Tacitus says that he does not vouch for the truth of the reports; Dio Cassius frankly admits that he knew no certainty about it. The allusion of the contemporary Lucan is in the *Pharsalia*, viii. 406-410.

'It is with repugnance that we mark not only writers such as Suetonius and men of his kidney, but also Tacitus, dwell on this disgusting theme with a certain pleasure, and turn it over and over; but indeed scandalous stories of this sort were those for which the public, for whom they catered, had most taste. However, if in this matter we may with clear conscience absolve the mother of Nero from these horrible reports spread by her contemporaries, yet we must not forget that she was reaping like measure to that which she had dealt to others in her Memoirs.'—Stahr, *Agrippina*, p. 247.

In the basement of the Capitoline Museum are two medallions, in white marble (Stanza III. Nos. 15 and 17), one of which represents Nero, and the other in all probability is Poppaea. She is shown in profile with a rather long nose, somewhat in the line of brow, like the medal, and with the lips parted. The hair, however, is gathered up and woven about her head as a crown, much in the same way as in the famous seated Agrippina in the floor above.

Of the origin of these medallions I know nothing, but the fashion in which the hair is worn indicates a later date—that of the Faustinas. The medallions were suspected by Winckelmann to be Renaissance sculpture.

Precisely similar is the way in which the hair is worn on the bust attributed to Poppaea in the Room of the Emperors. There remain on this bust small bronze pegs, to which a metal diadem was formerly attached. It was, therefore, almost certainly the portrait of an empress, and it is unlike any other empress we know. The greater part of the nose is restored. It was found near S. Lorenzo fuori le Mura.

Failing information relative to the medallions, we are left to conjecture. If those medallions could be determined to be genuine antiques, the difficulty would disappear, as the change of headgear is perhaps by no means so certainly indicative of a later date as Bernoulli supposes. The twisting of a plait round the head is a natural way of utilising the hair for adornment. The so-called Poppaea in the Uffizi Gallery at Florence is a very inferior piece of sculpture. The eyes are large, remarkably so, and the hair is of the period of the Agrippinas, major and minor. But the nose is entirely new, and the attribution to Poppaea is purely conjectural.

Of Otho, the husband, a good many genuine portrait-busts remain. He was sincerely attached to his wife; and to have to resign her to Nero was to him a bitter grief, but he brought it on himself by his own folly. According to general opinion, the marriage of Poppaea with Otho was a mere formality, the emperor having already set his heart on her. But this does not appear to have been the case. Otho was furiously jealous, 'he loved her so extravagantly that he could not with patience endure Nero as his rival,' says Suetonius; nevertheless, the other view was condensed into a smart epigram on the banishment of Otho to Lusitania, and circulated in Rome.[1] For ten years he remained away, and when he finally was elevated for a few months to the throne, one of his first acts was to restore the statues of Poppaea that had been thrown down after the fall of Nero. The busts of Otho that we have nearly all belong to a later period than that of which we treat. He seems

[1] Tacitus gives two versions of the early relation of Nero to Poppaea and Otho. It is best to follow that in the *Annals* which was written subsequently to the *Histories*. It is probable that he had acquired information which led him to alter his opinion as expressed in the first of these works that he composed.

to have affected to imitate Nero in his appearance. He was an exquisite of the period. He shaved daily, and rubbed his face with bread sops. According to Suetonius, his main reason for uniting with Galba for the overthrow of Nero was resentment for having been robbed by the tyrant of his wife. He showed himself in Lusitania to be a good governor, and his end on the field of Bedriacum was full of dignity. He committed suicide to save further effusion of blood in civil war.

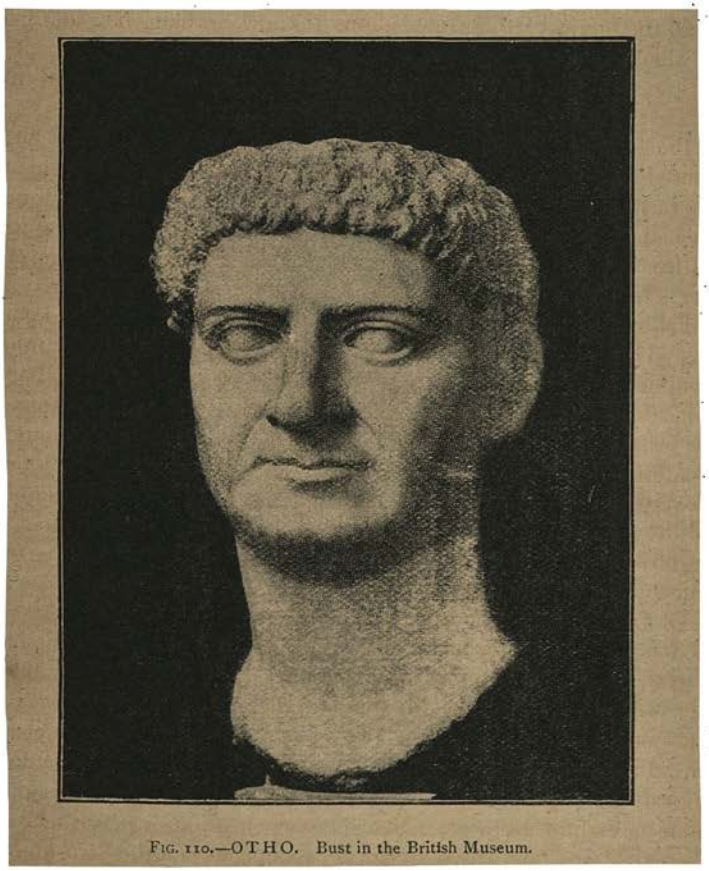


FIG. 110.—OTHO. Bust in the British Museum.

One of the finest busts of Otho that exists is in the British Museum. In this, as in all others, the wig is distinguishable. It shows the man at his best, firm of mouth, and with a fairly massive brow.

In the Uffizi is one of him as an effeminate dandy. M. Major says, 'He has a feminine look, and is of a regular and gentle beauty. In his face is a weary expression.' But this flatters. Otho was a plain man.

Another is in the Capitoline Museum. 'The Uffizi bust shows him effeminate, his eyes floating in a dream. This one shows us the man

of character looking death in the face. In fact, the two are very unlike, only the coiffure is the same. This one seems to us the most real as a portrait. The eye looks into the distance; the mouth is fleshy, but not so plump; the nose less *banalement regulier*.'

In the Hall of Busts at the Vatican are two, Nos. 278 and 307; one in the Torlonia Gallery, No. 534, the hair of the wig only indicated, so that probably a helmet covered the head. The bust is in military cuirass and chlamys. A youthful bust is in the Louvre, No. 2408.

V.—THE DEATH OF AGRIPPINA.

WE have reached the turning-point in the career of Nero. We may absolve him of the death of Britannicus. Hitherto he had committed no murderous crimes, but he had been crossed by no one in his pursuit of pleasure. Now that he was really a man, and wore a beard, and had lost the shrill pipe of boyhood, he found his mother stand between him and the object of his pursuit, she defending his young and innocent wife, and waving him back from the course of vice into which he was precipitating himself. His hesitation was not long. Two impediments must be removed. As long as his mother stood before Octavia he could not repudiate her; till Octavia was divorced he could not marry Poppaea. This latter designing woman, probably older than Nero, had succeeded in thoroughly imbuing his feeble mind with the conviction that his seat on the throne was insecure so long as Agrippina lived, that care for his own safety demanded the removal of his mother. He had formed his resolve in the spring of A.D. 59. The only question with him was how the deed was to be done. The domestics of Agrippina were so warmly attached to her that he recognised the impossibility of tampering with them. Poison he mistrusted; it was reported that she took the Mithridaticum every morning. 'How to despatch her with the sword, and yet conceal the deed, no one could suggest; he feared, moreover, lest the person selected for the perpetration of so heinous an act should disregard his orders.' Anicetus, an enfranchised slave, tutor to Nero in his infancy, but now admiral of the fleet at Misenum, hated by and hating Agrippina, here proffered the aid of his ingenuity. He was a skilful mechanician.

A.U.C. 812.
A.D. 59.
Aet. 22.

Agrippina had given orders for some repairs to be done to one of her villas, and means of access to it were obtained whilst the workmen were engaged on it. Over her bed, which must have been a sort of four-poster, was a heavy top. The supports were sawn through, and it was contrived that when she got into bed it should fall on and crush her. But she was forewarned that some mischief was intended, and she escaped the danger.

It happened that Nero attended a theatrical performance at which

a ship had appeared on the stage, that suddenly opened in the middle, discharged a number of wild beasts, and then closed again. The idea immediately occurred to him that he might contrive the death of his

FIG. 111.—AGRIPPINA MINOR. Statue at Naples.

mother by similar means, and he communicated his idea to Anicetus, who at once undertook to execute the design. 'Such a vessel,' said he, 'as may fall to pieces and plunge her unawares in the water, is easily made.

Nothing is more common than accidents at sea, and if she be thus lost by shipwreck, who will say that she perished by human contrivance, and not by the chance of winds and waves? When once she is dead, let the prince erect a temple and altars to the deceased, and parade his filial reverence, and no one will entertain suspicions that she came to her end by foul means.'

Nero was satisfied; Anicetus received orders to build the vessel; Nero was to find an opportunity for enticing his mother on to it.

That opportunity soon came. At the beginning of March Nero went to Baiae to attend the great feast of Minerva that began on the 19th and lasted five days. He had taken care to spread beforehand the report of an intended reconciliation with his mother. He repeated several times in public the assurance that the estrangement caused him pain, that he regretted his conduct towards her, and would take the occasion of the festival for cementing their old relations again. 'It was true,' he said, 'that she had a hasty temper, but it was his duty to humour it, as she was his parent; and he would soothe her ruffled spirits.' He calculated that what he said would be wafted to her ears, and he knew that her tender mother's heart would at once gush with love and forgiveness towards him.

He played his part admirably, and he succeeded completely in allaying the suspicions of Agrippina, and that she entertained some, we are assured; she had been admonished to be on her guard. But when Nero wrote to her with his own hand in cheerful and affectionate terms, inviting her to associate herself with him in the great Quinquatrian festival at Baiae, her mistrust vanished like smoke. His letter found her at Antium, in her favourite villa, where twenty-two years before she had borne her son. The remembrance of this helped to melt her heart, never really steeled against her child. Her talking thrush said no word of warning as she left her gardens and descended to the little haven below where her Liburnian galley was at anchor.

'Whoever has, once in his life, had the felicity to see the incomparable loveliness of heaven, earth, and sea in the Gulf of Baiae on a smiling spring day, will readily understand why the lord of the world chose this enchanting nook as his favourite resort at the time of the spring festival, for, as Horace sang—

"No gulf on earth outshines the charming Baiae."

Even now, nigh on two thousand years after these events, the wanderer who makes the circuit of the bay from Solfatara to Pozzuoli and Baiae, and from Centi Camerelle to the so-called Sepolcro di Agrippina, will find the whole coast covered with countless ruins of splendid edifices of all kinds, of villas and temples, theatres and summer-houses, destroyed by earthquakes and flames, or by the vandalism of barbaric ages, —remains that, even in their crumbled condition, bear testimony to a

splendour and beauty scarcely paralleled in these days anywhere. The very name of Baiae, the most famous and luxurious of all bathing resorts of the Roman world, contained in itself, as countless notices of the ancients inform us, the expression of all the joy and the magnificence of the antique world. The heights covered with green woods, folding round the town which faces the south, were crowned with the ancient castle-like country houses of the rich and noble of the closing epoch of Republican Rome; thence Marius, Pompeius, and Caesar had once looked down on the life of the baths. Since then, countless villas and gay palaces had crowded the shore, indeed had invaded the sea itself, sustained on vast substructures, converting the entire beach into one ring of pleasure resorts, showing like a fairy scene to those who approached by sea from Rome, and had doubled the Cape of Misenum, covered with its fragrant gardens full of exotics. In the depth of this great bay that began at Misenum, lay first the bathing and harbour town of Baiae; then within another depression that shining town of villas, Bauli, not far off the Lucrine and Avernian lakes, the former divided from the sea by an embankment eight stadia long, and wide enough to serve for driving over, erected by Marcus Agrippa, the grandfather of Agrippina; opposite Baiae was the town of Puteoli, with its marble temple of Serapis, one of the most magnificent monuments of Graeco-Roman architecture, and one whose mighty pillars attract the attention of travellers at the present day.'[1]

The remains of the villa of Nero are thought to be at the headland of Baiae, where hot springs still rise and fill the vaults with vapour. Agrippina herself had a villa in the Elysian Fields, near the little harbour of Bauli, with the Monte di Procida at its back.

When Agrippina's Liburnian turned the headland of Misenum, she saw the imperial galley approach to welcome her and accompany her to the landing-place at Bauli. Her son descended from his vessel and greeted his mother with clasp of hand and kiss. Here a surprise awaited her. Among the vessels at anchor in the little bay was a splendid galley, gilded and with silken sails, which Nero presented to her along with its company of sailors and military guard. It was a proud as well as happy moment for the Empress who had been humbled by the withdrawal of sentinels and escort. Now, in token of reconciliation, the guard was restored. Before Nero left her, to return to Baiae, to allow her time to rest after her voyage, he invited her to a banquet that was to take place that same evening in honour of her arrival and as a pledge of their reconciliation. The intimate comrade of the emperor, Otho, not yet sent to Lusitania, was to give the feast.[2] Dissolute as Otho was, we cannot believe that he was privy to the infamous design on the life of Agrippina—which was to pave the way for his own removal and the loss of his wife. It is more probable

[1] Stahr., *Agrippina*.

[2] Suet., *Otho* 3.

that he was pleased at the proposed reconciliation, and hoped that the influence of Agrippina would now again be strong enough to withhold his friend from robbing him of his passionately loved Poppaea.

Agrippina accepted the invitation.

When she was at the point of departure, she was told that her Liburnian that had conveyed her from Antium had been run into by one of the vessels in the bay, and was too seriously injured to receive her on board. For a moment she hesitated. It was afterwards sup-

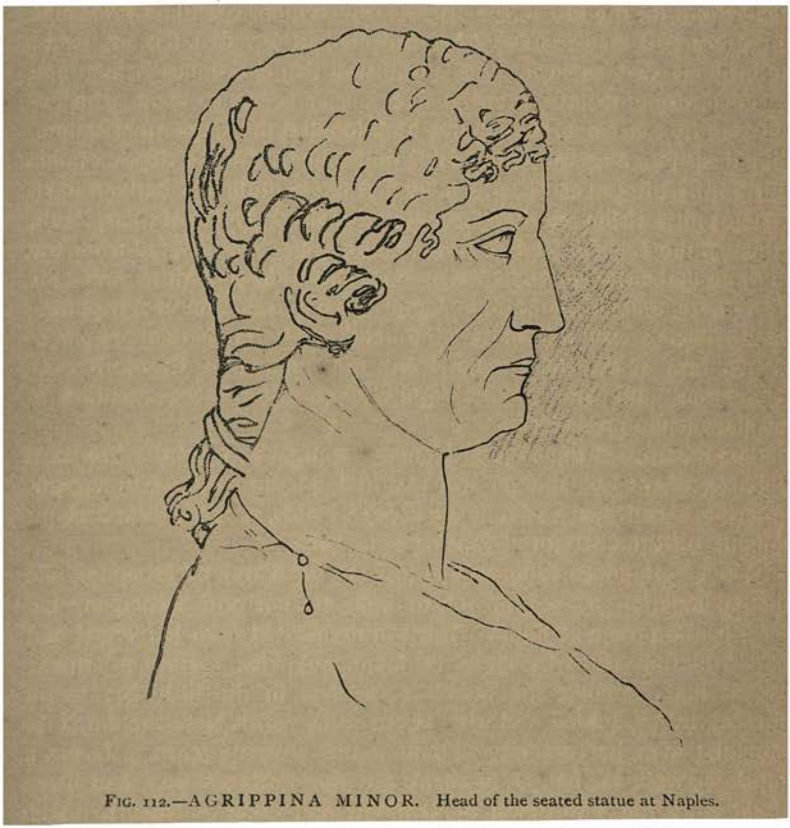


FIG. 112.—AGRIPPINA MINOR. Head of the seated statue at Naples.

posed that she then suspected some evil; but this is not likely. She was in doubt whether to go to Baiae in the new ship given her by Nero, or by land. The distance was inconsiderable. Delay would be occasioned by ordering the galley to be made ready, and she elected to be conveyed in her litter to the villa of Otho at Baiae.

On reaching her destination, the host and all the guests received Agrippina with tokens of respect the most profound, and signs of satisfaction at the reconciliation, probably sincere.

At table she occupied the place of honour by the emperor. 'So it be-

hoved her,' said he, 'to whom he owed his life and his elevation;' and he seemed in his most cheerful mood, and to be full of his old childish affection for her. Throughout the evening he paid attention to none other. With his coaxing words, his caresses, and then with serious talk about matters of state in which he sought her advice, Agrippina felt her heart relieved from all the shadows and sorrows that had clouded and soured it. It seemed to her that the old days had returned again, in which Nero was her dutiful and tender son, and that now she would recover some of her former authority and majesty. The wine she drank, the amber (fusca) Falernian, from the vineyards hard by, dark as brown sherry with old age[1] served to warm still further her fond and pleased spirit, and she did not remark that the banquet had been protracted beyond the wonted hour, deep into the night. At last, about midnight, she rose and gave the signal for departure. She intended to return in her litter as she had come, but it was announced to her that the state galley placed at her disposal by the emperor was awaiting her at the landing-place below the villa, and she was easily persuaded to avail herself of the convoy given her by her dear son, and dismiss all her own attendants except one man and her favourite maid.

When Nero bade her farewell, as she stepped on board the vessel contrived for her destruction, the full force of this awful moment weighed on him, as he said to himself that he saw for the last time the mother who had borne him, and had nursed him on her knees, and stilled his infant sorrows at her bosom; and that he was sending her to death, unconscious of what awaited her, with her heart full of tears of happiness at being again united to the son who occupied all her thoughts and engrossed all her love. But he had broken down every bridge behind him, he could not go back from his purpose even if he willed it. This feeling overcame him. He clasped her passionately to his heart, and looked long and steadily into her eyes, which were so soon to close in death. He covered her hands, her bosom with his kisses. Then he handed her over to his admiral, that Anicetus who had contrived the treacherous vessel, and was there to see that it did not fail in its object, and who, finding that she had gone by land from Bauli, followed her by sea as her evil fate.

The night was warm, still, and dark, no moon shone, but the sky was thick sown with countless stars, as Agrippina, doomed to death, started in the galley, attended by one of her own men only, Gallus, who stood by the steersman, and by her maid, Aceronia Pollia, who lay at the feet of her mistress in the deck-cabin which was covered by a sort of roof. There the happy lady rested on a sofa, whilst Aceronia talked to her on the topic that filled the thoughts of her mistress, the regret of Nero for his unkindness in the past, and resolve to compensate for it by greater filial piety in the future.

[1] 'Candida nigrescant vetulo crystalla Falerno.'—MARTIAL.

'The gods, as if to bring damning testimony against the impious deed, granted a night lit with stars,' says Tacitus, 'while not a breath disturbed the unruffled deep.' The beak of the vessel was directed northwards, and the water flashed luminous over the oars as they rose out of the dark tide. Suddenly a mysterious signal rang through the stillness of the night, and with a crash the hood of the cabin weighted with lead fell upon the three victims. Gallus, who was standing, was struck down and killed, but the sides of the sofa held up the weight that had fallen, and protected the ladies. Then followed a scene of indescribable confusion. Apparently the mechanism of the ship was so contrived that the fall of the roof of her cabin should set the rest of the machinery in action, which would make the vessel part and precipitate those under this roof into the sea. But the sofa had interfered with the proper working of the mechanism, and the contrivance failed. Only some of those on board had been let into the secret, and these used their best endeavours to wreck the galley by running to one side; but either they did not act sufficiently in concert, or they were hindered by the counter efforts of those not initiated into the intentions of their admiral, for all that the former could effect was to make the vessel so lurch that Agrippina and Aceronia slipped into the water or were thrust overboard as they worked their way from under the fallen roof. Aceronia, clinging to the side, forgetting in her fear for her own life her duty to her mistress, shrieked out, 'Save me! save me! I am the emperor's mother!' At once she was struck at with marlinespikes, and sank.

Agrippina, from whom attention was withdrawn, remained silent, and escaped the blows of the murderers, though receiving a wound on her shoulder, which interfered with her swimming, as she struck out. Her powers were failing her when unexpected help arrived. A couple of fishing boats were out that night as they often are nowadays, their masters engaged in nocturnal fishing. They came to the aid of the exhausted swimmer and lifted her into one of the boats. She was conveyed, at her command, to the Lucrine lake, the oars of the rowers, may be, dispersing the roses that were strewn in thousands on festal occasions over its still, bright waters,[1] and in this blessed region roses bloomed all the year. Agrippina had a villa on the shore of this lake, and she sent for a litter and was conveyed hastily into it. On her way she had time to think over what had happened, and to form her resolution. The more she considered every particular: the friendly letter, the gushing affection of Nero, the extravagant honour shown her: the more convinced was she that she had been the victim of a dastardly attempt on her life. Her only chance of safety lay in pretending entire ignorance of it. At once she despatched her freedman Agerinus to Nero, to

[1] 'Videre comessationes navigantium, et symphoniarum cantibus strepentes lacus—to generat cimbarum variis coloribus picta—fluctuantem toto lacum rosam.'—SENECA.

announce her happy escape from a lamentable accident, to entreat him to moderate his impatience, and defer visiting her till her wounds had been bound up, and she had somewhat recovered from her fatigues. She gave her son the chance of repentance. It was possible that in Nero the natural instinct of love for a mother might revive, that he might see that the gods had interposed to save him from the guilt of matricide, and shrink from pursuing his purpose further. She understood now the long look he had cast on her as they parted, the visible emotion in his countenance. It had not been assumed, it was the manifestation of the stirring in him of genuine feeling. Not a word fell from her lips, not a sign did she give by which her frightened servants might suspect that an attempt had been made to destroy her. Then, with calmness, she ordered her wound and bruises to be bandaged and anointed, and that the will and the effects of the murdered Aceronia should be placed under seal.

This being done she waited the return of her chamberlain.

In the museum of Naples is a wonderful statue of Agrippina in her old age, seated in a chair, lost in sad thoughts. So must she have sat on that terrible night.

We see the same face as that which we have looked on in youth and radiant beauty in the Lateran, but now worn with trouble and withered with age. 'Full of energy, but sad,' says Taine. 'The expression resigned, the attitude that of one exhausted, weary, *addolorata*,' says Major.

Let us for a moment look from the villa at Bauli to the imperial residence at Baiae, to which Nero had returned, a prey to the most conflicting emotions, tortured by his conscience, hoping yet fearing to hear of the success of his scheme, rejoicing to think that now the main hindrance to his union with the beautiful Poppaea was removed.

But the worst was over—the parting from his mother. Now he might think of the fruit that would fall to him after having taken this step towards it. He had little fear that the truth concerning his mother's death should become public. Night and the deep tell no tales. Anicetus in his own interest would be silent; the mariners would be dispersed to distant stations. Otho, Burrhus, Seneca were not in the plot, for it had been contrived among the fewest number possible, for the sake of ensuring secrecy. He would pour forth floods of tears, pronounce a glowing oration at her funeral, elevate her to the gods, and dedicate temples in her honour. All this he would do to deceive the credulous populace.

Thus waited Nero, pacing his courts in fever of expectancy in the early morning, sleepless.

Presently the news came of the failure of the attempt. Agrippina had escaped with a slight wound and some contusions, her companions were dead. These tidings struck Nero as with a thunderbolt. Agrippina had misjudged her son. All the ebullitions of better

feeling ceased from this moment in his feeble and cowardly heart, and he was overcome with terror. He dreaded the consequences. He feared lest his mother should rouse Italy with the tale, and that all that was good and noble in the Roman people should revolt against him and insist on the death of him who had dared to lay his impious hands on his mother. 'What resources have I against her?' he piteously inquired, 'if she comes against me, thirsting for revenge, at the head of her armed slaves, having kindled revolt among the soldiery? What shall I do when she forces her way into the senate, when she appeals to the people in the Forum, and charges me with having contrived the shipwreck, wounded her and slain her friends? Call Burrhus and Seneca!' These two advisers were summoned, and in overwhelming agitation, quaking with fear, Nero told them all he had done, told them of his failure, and of his anticipations. Both were silent, silent with dismay; and when Burrhus was bidden to send soldiers to kill the Empress, he bluntly replied that 'the praetorians would never draw the sword against the daughter of Germanicus.'

Seneca knew not what to say, what to advise. In Nero's present mood no words would avail to allay his excitement, already bordering on madness. Then Anicetus stepped forward and said, 'I will accomplish what I began.'

His head was at stake. If Agrippina lived, he knew his employer well enough to be sure that Nero would put him to death for having risked the life of Agrippina, so as to disguise his own connivance. Nero was relieved by this offer. 'Now only do I receive the *imperium*,' said he, 'and from the hands of my freedman, Anicetus.' Then he urged him to all despatch, and to take with him only such men as he could rely on. At that moment the chamberlain, Agerinus, was announced as coming with a message from the empress-mother. As he entered, Anicetus adroitly threw a dagger at his feet, and then cried out that Agrippina had sent her freedman to assassinate the emperor. Agerinus was arrested and loaded with chains. This Anicetus did to give consistency to a fiction that the mother of the prince had concerted his destruction, and then, when her plan failed, had killed herself with vexation. With all haste Anicetus collected a band of picked men from among those belonging to the fleet under his command, and at their head took his way to the villa of Agrippina as the grey dawn began to lighten over the volcanic craters and ridges to the south-east. The Baian palace and the Lucrine villa lay not many miles apart, and these incidents, crowded within a narrow space, had all occurred in the course of a few hours. As soon as Agrippina's disaster was known to the residents of the coast, they rushed to the beach. 'Some,' says Tacitus, 'ascended the mole; some scrambled on to the boats attached to the strand; others ran into the water up to their midst; some stretched out their arms. The whole coast resounded with

lamentations, vows, and with the shouts of a multitude, asking all kinds of questions and receiving most unsatisfactory answers. A great many bore torches.' When it was known that Agrippina had escaped, the multitude hastened in the direction of her villa, giving vent to their joy and waving their torches. But on reaching her doors, they found them beset by the armed band of Anicetus. He had posted guards at every entrance and then had gone forward himself, striding over the mosaic 'Salve' at the door, and had imperiously ordered the slaves to conduct him to the presence of their mistress. In the meantime she had been awaiting the return of her messenger, and as the time drew on and he did not reappear, the last flicker of hope expired in her bosom. The maid, hearing the sound of voices outside, the shouts and cheers of the people, then the stillness followed by the strokes against the door, stepped from the dimly-lighted room to inquire the cause of these noises. 'What!' exclaimed the Augusta, raising her head for a moment and looking after the servant girl, 'will you also desert me?'

Anicetus entered and beckoned to some trusty ruffians to follow on his heels. Agrippina was resting on a couch, a single lamp burning by her, but by its dim light she recognised Anicetus. Her dignity, her dauntless spirit, did not even then forsake her. 'Hast thou come to see me?' she asked. 'Then go, tell my son that I am already recovered. Hast thou come to slay me? Then I say it is not my son who commissioned thee.'

Instead of answering her a ship's captain struck her over the head with a stick.

'See!' said the empress, 'strike the womb that bore the monster!' They were her last words. A rain of blows descended on her, and she fell dead on the marble pavement. Was it true that when the astrologer foretold her son should reign, and be his mother's slayer, she had answered, 'Occidat dum imperet!'? if so, fearfully had that reckless word been fulfilled.

That same night, when the soldiers had withdrawn, weeping servants of this noble woman lifted her body, laid it on a couch and bore it forth, hastily collected fuel in the cold dawn, and burnt it in her garden. One of her freedmen ran himself through with a sword, on her hastily erected sepulchre.

'During the reign of Nero no tomb was raised to her,' says Tacitus, 'nor was her grave enclosed; but afterwards, from the respect borne her by her servants, she had a humble monument elevated to her on the road to Misenum, near a villa of the Dictator Caesar, that towers above the coast and bays below.'

The Farnese *Agrippina seduta* in the museum at Naples has been already alluded to. The question must be shortly considered whether we are justified in believing it to be a representation of Agrippina the

younger. Visconti, Mongez, Böttticher, and several others are agreed that it does. Clarac and a few others think that it represents the elder Agrippina. Bernoulli does not hold that it represents either. Mr. Conrad Dressler traces in it the same features as in the Farnese Agrippina (Fig. 109). For my part I have no hesitation in saying that it is the younger Agrippina.

The hair is certainly the same in character as the coiffure of the younger Agrippina on the silver medal with the head of Nero on the reverse, and as that in which she faces Nero, and also as that in which she is represented along with Claudius. It has very much the appearance of being a wig.

Bernoulli considers that the profile is not the same as that of the Lateran statue. I am by no means of that opinion. On the contrary, it seems to me that allowing for age the faces are the same, and Mr. Conrad Dressler, the sculptor to whom I submitted them, agrees with me. The anatomical structure, as he pointed out, is the same, but of course the roundness of the fleshy parts has gone, and the *Agrippina seduta* of Naples has lost a good many of her teeth.

With regard to the expression of the face a difficulty has been entertained. Friedrichs says, 'The character of Agrippina, as given us in history, is not so attractive as her statue.' Bötticher says, 'With great skill the artist has succeeded in gently toning down the individuality of this infamous wife of Claudius, and in giving to her likeness a thoroughly noble appearance.' Now it is quite true that, as Friedrichs says, the portrait statue represents a woman more engaging than she is shown us by Tacitus, Suetonius, and Dio—but then—did these historians give us the true woman, or rather, have they not buried the noble and pure outline under a heap of hateful scandal, that is almost demonstrably false? The eye is directed to all this foulness, and the casual reader does not question whether it belongs to the real Agrippina or whether it be merely the filth flung at her by those who hated her. Proud she was, ambitious she was, but queenly, honourable, and pure in life to the end, unless we are very much mistaken. Her lot fell in difficult times, she had to strike out in the faces of her enemies to save herself, and she was forced—she could not help herself—to marry her uncle. She must do that or die. To die she would have consented, but she could not sacrifice also the prospects of her son. I will conclude with Adolf Stahr's description of this incomparable statue of one of the grandest women of history.

'The mother of Nero sits in a half-lying position, all her muscles relaxed, on a low stool with broad back, the left leg cast over the right, so that the left foot rests on the upper surface of the right. Both legs are stretched out in full, the feet shod with sandals which are fastened above with brooches. Her slim, well-built frame is clothed in a long thin (linen) dress reaching to her feet, the *stola* of

Roman noble ladies, with which the arms are covered as far as the elbows. The loose short arms are slit and fastened together with little brooches (*fibulae*). The upper garment is thrown back to the midst of the back, so that it forms a sort of soft cushion against the back of the deep seat, and is drawn together from right and left over the thighs, knees, and lower limbs, under the hands that are folded as those of one buried in thought, and are reposing on her lap. The general appearance is one of grand, unadorned simplicity; the expression of the face is one of deep thought and of the weariness succeeding on deep thought, and is not that of a rest that gives refreshment. The face is especially remarkable. It is that of a woman well over forty. Her features are prematurely thin and slack, and exhibit a singular contrast to the still full, strong arms and the beautiful hands, which along with the arms are devoid of bracelets and rings. The bust also is full and fine, and the moulding is distinguishable through the delicate texture of the dress. The hair is as unadorned as are the arms and hands, and it is skilfully frizzled into countless little curls which descend over the forehead to the eyebrows, and overlap the delicate ears. On the other hand, the hinder part of her coiffure is smooth from the middle of the skull, and ends in a short, Egyptian knot about three or four inches long. Brow and eyes, the least transitory of female charms, are beautifully formed, the brows finely pencilled, only slightly dipping towards the temples. The nose is a little arched in the middle and somewhat sinks towards the point. The lips of the firmly-set mouth are delicately small, but the lower lip protrudes slightly, intensifying the expression of energy. The hollow at the chin is very deep and sharp, the chin itself is not full and forcible, and it is specially in this portion that the relaxation shows itself, which is produced by old age, the signs of which are visible but less pronounced in the features and outline above. If one disregards this flabbiness, then an astonishing resemblance arrests one—one that shows us how beautiful Agrippina may have been in youth—for she resembles the empress Eugénie of France.

'The spiritual expression is that of one wearied and disillusioned. Even if we were not prepossessed with the conviction that this was the mother of Nero, we would say at the first glance that just such Agrippina must have been in her last years. And in very truth this is the Agrippina of the final three or four years of her life, set before us in portraiture as a living image of the woman as she appeared in the domestic circle; this is a statue done for her most intimate friends. No attitude could have been more appropriate than this one of her seated in repose, and one that must have been usual to her and familiar to all who knew her well.'

It was well that the last empress in whose veins ran the Julian blood should find her last resting-place close to the building once

tenanted by the great Julius, the founder of the dynasty. There at the present day, near the modern Baccolo, between the cape of Misenum and the ruins of Baiae, the peasantry point to a smoke-blackened shapeless ruin as the sepulchre of Agrippina.

VI.—THE INSANITY OF NERO.

WHAT advantage did Nero reap from this crime? Did he at once proceed to divorce Octavia and marry Poppaea? Not till three years later. Did he now assert himself as a sovereign ruler, emancipated from the control of his mother? Not in the least. He made a greater fool of himself than before, that was all.

A.U.C. 812. A.D. 59. Aet. 22.

Roman scandal said that immediately after the murder, Nero went to the villa at the Lucrine lake and looking on the corpse, with crazy humour said, 'I had no idea before that she was so good-looking.' But Tacitus admits that this was mere gossip. He however asserts that the crime was followed by a period of terrible distress of mind, through which flashed hallucinations. A treatise by Dr. Wiedemeister of Hanover on the 'Caesarian insanity' is especially valuable in dealing with the mental condition of Nero.

Dr. Wiedemeister says that Nero was not only predisposed to insanity by the intermarriages in the families from which he sprung, and in which, at all events on one side, there was scrofula, but that the historians afford us quite sufficient data for asserting that thrice in his life he fell a victim to periodic mania.

'This form of mental malady is characterised by three stages, often very distinctly marked. The initial stage is melancholy, the central stage is raving madness, and the last stage is again melancholy. The first and last stages are, for the most part, of short duration, and are less constant and pregnant manifestations than the central stage, which gives the malady its name of mania. When the melancholy stages are well developed, then the person afflicted is troubled with lack of appetite and of sleep, and distress in the pit of the heart (praecordial anxiety), is timorous, oppressed, full of self-reproach and despair, of physical as well as mental limpness and exhaustion, of disinclination for bodily or intellectual activity, and is subject to hallucinations of all sorts. The patient broods over his thoughts and fancies, withdraws from society, and all his conversation, as his thoughts, revolve about the same dismal topics; he seeks solitude and holds himself unworthy to associate with others. When the malady does not advance beyond this stage, then the patient plunges into all kinds of dissipation, and often seeks to drown his troubles in drink. Not infrequently his over-tension finds relief in an act of violence committed against himself or others.

'Presently the second period is reached, which is mania, and in that the patient is transformed. Now the world belongs to him. No more self-reproach, terror, and remorse. Now he allows himself everything from which previously he was restrained by law, morals, or custom. He thinks he is capable of doing everything. He not only thinks this,

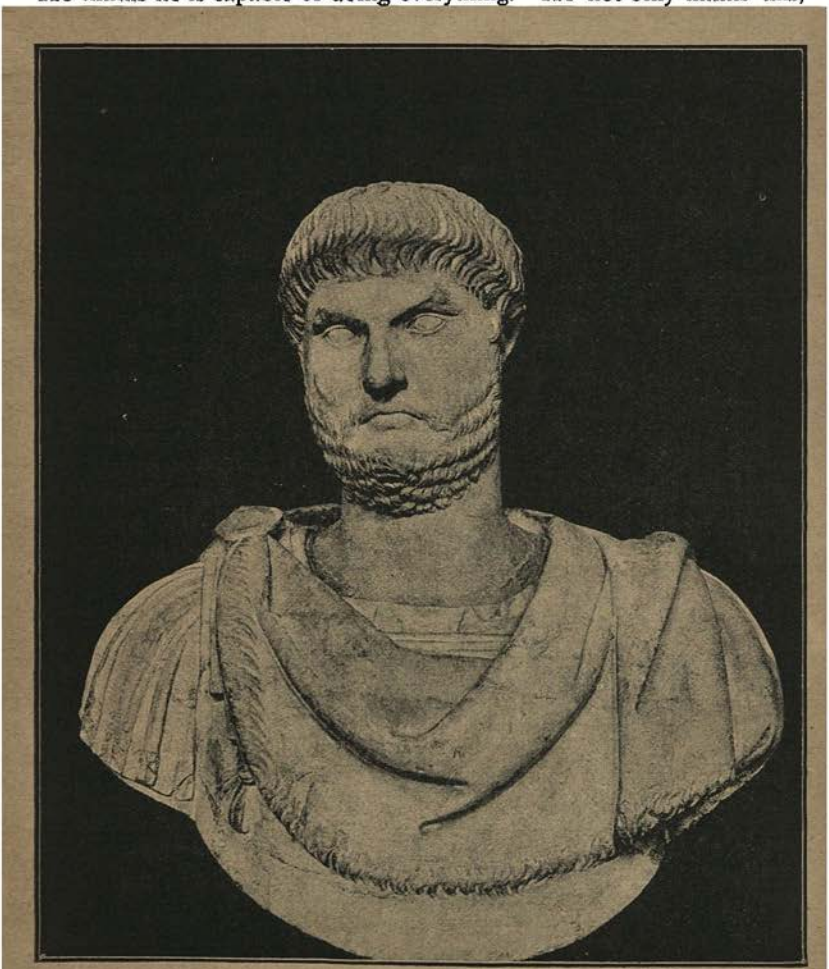


FIG. 113.—NERO. Bust in the Louvre.

but he is so. The previous limpness of his muscles has given place to nervous vigour. Before, he shrank from the least exertion, now he will pass weeks, months, years in violent exercise under which previously he would have succumbed. His feet are always active, his arm needs no bracing, the muscles of his breast and throat allow him to

talk and sing as long as he likes. The sense of weariness is gone from him. Before, his ideas revolved in one limited circle, but now the wild tumultuous flow of his thoughts rushes forth in all directions. He therefore appears to be more intelligent, wittier, more eloquent than previously. New ideas are continually boiling up in his brain, and as he is able to shape and combine them with a rapidity impossible for others to follow, he surprises his companions by his wit, brilliancy, and conversational power. In his own phantasy he is taller, greater, stronger than other men, his voice is more melodious and fuller in volume than that of any other man, his eloquence is of surpassing force, and though he may make the greatest fiasco when exhibiting himself before others, yet he cannot perceive that he has not overcome all men by the display of his superlative powers.

'The melancholy madman actually hears voices address him from outside and from within, reproaching and threatening him, and actually sees forms that are full of menace. But the raving madman really hears only his own voice sweeter than the strain of any flute, and powerful as the thunder of the sea; really sees himself superhuman in his strength, size, and beauty. All his nervous faculties are strung to the highest pitch, and this expansive mood fills him with unutterable happiness and self-satisfaction. No man places his light under a bushel, least of all the madman at this period. He forces himself into prominence, he will have others see how strong he is, how sweetly he can sing, and how beautifully he is moulded. Let the world behold what a man he is, and cast itself at his feet.

'Nevertheless the maniac's mind is open to some unpleasant perceptions; but they act in a reverse manner upon him to what they do upon the man afflicted with melancholy. The maniac regards himself as not having his importance properly appreciated, as an object of envy, jealousy, and hatred, and as persecuted by those who are envious of his powers or greatness. Consequently one of the phenomena of this period of insanity is the fixed idea of being persecuted. The melancholy madman believes himself hated and pursued, and is inclined to fly from his enemies; but the maniac seeks to revenge himself on them. With him it is a crime for any one to differ from him in opinion, to doubt his superiority, to be indifferent when he exhibits his extraordinary powers. For the maniac is the centre of the world, which was created for him, and he who does not prostrate himself at his feet must be brushed out of existence. This mood drives ordinary mortals to commit acts of reckless violence, and the mighty of the earth to become tyrants.

'The third stage is like the first. By degrees the maniac falls out of his whirlwind of felicity into despondency like that in which he was before, and then gradually he recovers his senses. It, however, sometimes happens that the first and last stages do not occur.'

Now, knowing this, we have sufficient data given us by the historians of antiquity to say that Nero had three accesses of insanity during his reign. He was not mad when he resolved on and carried out his mother's murder; but his first attack followed it immediately, and was precipitated by the excitement of his feelings and the anguish of his conscience consequent on it.

'The *first* attack under which Nero suffered began in April A.D. 59, and lasted till the autumn of A.D. 61, that is to say, for two years and a half, and the first stage and last stage of melancholia lasted each four months and a half, in all for nine months, and the actual maniacal condition for one year and nine months. From the last quarter of 61 to the second quarter of 62 Nero was in a sound condition of mind.

'The *second* attack was in the autumn of 62, and lasted till April 65, consequently again two years and a half. The initial period was marked by the craze about being persecuted. A melancholy initial stage is not to be determined with any certainty, but a short intermediary period of tranquillity is noted, apparently following an attack of epilepsy in 64.

'The period of relative soundness lasted till the autumn of 65.

'The *third* attack was in the autumn of 65, and lasted till the spring of 68; again for two years and a half. At the beginning, a slight melancholy was shown; towards the end of his life the melancholy mood predominated in the emperor.'

Suetonius expressly tells us that in spite of all his debauches Nero was only three times disordered (*languit*) during the fourteen years of his reign. This expression probably refers to the depressed condition he was in when the melancholy fit was on him.

We may now resume the thread of our story.

When the crime had been committed, Burrhus and Seneca consulted what was to be done; and but one course appeared open to them, to conceal the facts as far as possible, and to represent the death of Agrippina as an execution committed on a woman who had attempted the life of the prince. Anicetus had furnished them with the outline of the story that was to be formulated, and he was actively engaged in circulating this fiction among the praetorians and the attendants of the emperor; though it did not receive ready credence, for, as many shrewdly observed, when a woman has but just escaped drowning, she is not then in a mood for a conspiracy.

Seneca drew up a letter to the senate in the name of Nero, the substance of which is given us by Tacitus. It was: 'That Agerinus, a confidential freedman of Agrippina, had been sent by her to assassinate Nero, but had been detected as he entered the emperor's presence with a dagger in his possession; and that she had atoned for her crime by suicide, on the suggestion of her own guilty conscience. To this was added a rehearsal of the crimes of Agrippina: how she had aimed at co-ordinate power with her son, and at drawing from the praetorians an oath of

submission and fidelity to herself; how that, disappointed in her ambition, she had become exasperated against the soldiers, the fathers, and the people of Rome, had opposed the giving of largesses to the soldiers and gifts to the people, and had plotted against the most illustrious citizens; how that she had attempted to take a seat in the senate, and how it had taxed all the ingenuity and abilities of her son to defeat her object in this matter. Then all the atrocities committed during the reign of Claudius were saddled on her, and the senate was congratulated on her fall.'

The cringing and obsequious senate at once passed votes of congratulation to the emperor on his happy escape, and vowed 'that the Quinquatrian festival, during which the conspiracy had been detected, should be celebrated by anniversary spectacles; that in the senate should be erected a statue of the preserving goddess, Minerva, hard by that of the prince, and that the birthday of Agrippina should be stamped in the calendar as a day of ill-luck.'

One man, Thrasea Paetus, had the decency to rise from his seat in the senate and leave it in protest; for, as Dio says, 'What he wanted to say, that he could not, and what he could say, that he would not.' 'Hereby laying a foundation of danger to himself, without doing good to any one,' says Tacitus. When this was represented to him, he answered, 'Nero may kill me, but hurt me he cannot.' He had never stooped to join in the base adulation of the prince; hitherto he had been wont to pass over the sallies of flattery in silence, or give them a curt assent.

A great festival of thanksgiving to the gods was voted because they had preserved the emperor from the murderous designs of his mother. When, during this celebration in April, the elephants drawing the imperial chariot of Augustus round the circus halted before the seats of the senators and refused to budge, the senators began to fear that their conduct had excited the indignation of heaven, and their hearts stood still with dread when the sun became totally eclipsed in the midst of the performance, so that the stars appeared (30th April).

In the meantime Nero had become a prey to a disordered mind. On the night of the murder, or rather on the morning, for it took place after turn of night, he was in the most profound agitation. Pale, with disordered face, he stared before him, now silent, as though struck speechless, then trembling in all his limbs.

At length he cast himself on his bed, but his deadly fear drove him from it, and as one crazed (*mentis inops*) he asked when the day would break. His condition was so pitiable that Burrhus was alarmed, and sought to pacify him by humouring the notion that he had been the object of a conspiracy. He sent the tribunes of the bodyguard to kiss his hands, and congratulate him on his escape from an unexpected danger.

Unable to stay longer in his villa so near to the place where Agrip-

pina had perished, he fled to Neapolis, and on his way thought that wailings sounded from the house of the dead, where the smoke of the pyre was still curling, and that trumpet blasts pealed from the rocks. 'The face of the country will not change as do the faces of courtiers,' he complained; and unable to endure the sight of the same sea and the same hills as those near which the crime had been committed, he hoped to find rest elsewhere. He appeared sad and dejected in his mien, seeming to be ill-pleased at his own preservation, and to mourn the death of his mother. Tacitus regards this as assumed, as a bit of deep dissimulation; but it was not so; he was in the first stage of madness, in the state of melancholia.

Deputations arrived from the adjacent Campanian municipalities to testify their joy at his deliverance, and victims were offered in the temples. But none of these flatteries relieved his ever-present unrest. He was full of anxiety, and in the deepest depression; restless day and night. If a feverish sleep visited his eyes, he was vexed with frightful dreams, and thought he saw the ghost of his mother glide about his couch, or the Furies surround him with their snake-scourges and burning torches; or again, he dreamt that he was seated in a boat and steering through a foaming sea. Then suddenly out of the darkness and storm a hand was stretched which snatched the helm from him, whereupon he would leap shrieking from his bed, quivering in every limb.

Even by day he was subject to hallucinations. He fancied the blare of a trumpet rang suddenly in his ears wherever he was, but always from the direction where lay the ashes of his mother. He moved from place to place in hopes of escaping this trumpet sound; but it followed him everywhere.

Magicians were called in to lay the spirits, or at all events to produce the ghost of Agrippina and learn from it how it might be appeased, that Nero might no more be haunted; but their exorcisms and invocations proved unavailing to dispel the phantasies that rioted in the sick brain of the wretched prince. This lasted all April. Hopes were entertained that on the 9th day of May, when was the festival of the Lemures—the Pagan All Souls Day—something might be achieved. Under the direction of Curio Nero followed all the ritual directions for the solemnisation of the rites, through the ensuing night of mystery, in which the ghosts walked. But in vain; he could obtain no alleviation to his melancholy. 'That I am safe,' wrote he to the senate, in acknowledgment of their message of congratulation, 'I hardly believe, and I do not know that I am glad of it,'[1] words that exactly express his mood. For no change of domicile afforded him any relief; wherever he went, rambling disconsolately from place to place in Campania, the hallucinations followed him.

[1] 'Salvum me esse adhuc, nec credo nec gaudio.'

But what magic could not effect, that was done by time. The hallucinations, the fear, and with it the melancholy, abated; and Nero was now in a humour to listen to the entreaties of his friends to return to Rome. Hitherto no persuasion would induce him to do this. He thought he was hated, loathed by the Roman people and senate for what he had done, that they would rise in a mass against the murderer of his mother.

His advisers urged him, as his best security, to affect the confidence of innocence and not to shrink from appearing in the capital. Accordingly he made his entrance into Rome. Forth streamed the senators in festal attire to meet him; their wives and children were ranged on either side of the Appian Way, strewing flowers and waving green boughs. The streets were thronged with seats, reared against the houses, to accommodate the multitude of spectators as at a triumphal procession. 'And a triumph indeed it was; Nero had conquered Rome, and now led its people at his chariot-wheels to the Capitol,' says Dean Merivale. Yet ominous indications were given that the people, though demonstrative of their curiosity and loyalty, did not excuse his crime. The statues of Agrippina had indeed been cast down, but one remained on the way, that had escaped overthrow, and a rug was hastily cast over it. Whereupon some one scrawled in chalk on the wrap, 'I veil myself in shame, but thou art not ashamed of thyself.'

The grim humour of the populace found its vent in significant acts. Leather sacks were at night slung to the statues of Nero—for the punishment of a parricide was to be sewed up in one and cast into the Tiber. One man exposed a boy in the slave-market with a board over his head, bearing the inscription, 'To be sold—lest he should murder his mother,' and on hoardings were scribbled the names of the parricides Nero, Orestes, and Alcmaeon. The epigram was posted upon the walls—

> 'Who says that Nero comes not of Aenean race,
> When each took off a parent?'[1]

On the stage an actor, when saying, 'Farewell, O father! farewell, O mother!' pretended to be eating a mushroom at the 'O Father,' and to strike out swimming at the 'O mother,' and was received with roars of laughter. He clenched the joke by waving his hand towards the benches of the senators, with the significant words—

> 'But you—you stand upon the brink of death.'

The shouts of 'Nero has killed his mother!' rang under the Palatine heights, and men brought their fellows before the emperor, charging them with having said this, 'not that they sought their destruction, but in order to give annoyance to Nero.'

[1] Aeneas carried his father on his shoulders from Troy.

On his return to Rome, the prince paid a visit to his aunt Domitia Lepida, who was laid up in bed, ill, as well as far advanced in years. She had ever hated Agrippina, as has been already related, because Crispus Passienus had divorced her to marry Agrippina. She did not reproach her nephew for what he had done, but stroked his cheek and chin, covered with a light beard, and said, 'Ah! may I but live to see the day when this is shaved for the first time.' Nero turned to those about him and observed in a low tone, that to satisfy her he must have his beard shaved at once. As she died shortly after, it was said that he had ordered the physicians to poison her, because he coveted her villa at Baiae, and her estates at Ravenna. But his remark relative to his intention of shaving at once, as her time was short, doubtless formed the basis of this accusation.

From this time Nero entered on the second stage of his lunacy. It must be borne in mind that mania in this stage does not necessarily exhibit itself in raving and violence; it is rather characterised by inordinate self-esteem coupled with extraordinary restlessness and vigour.

As has been already said, Nero had from the beginning of his reign taken a keen interest in horse- and chariot-racing. The Ahenobardi were a 'horsey' race. His father had been noted for hard driving, and in one of his headlong drives had run over a child. The love of horses came to him from his mother's side also; it was manifest in his uncle Caius. Now, along with his chariot-driving, Nero took enthusiastically to lyre-playing and singing. He was not satisfied with exhibiting at his own table or in his own gardens, but must show off in public, to the consternation and disgust of Seneca and Burrhus; for however lightly they might regard moral offences, such a defiance of the laws of etiquette was in their eyes heinous to the last degree. The moral lapses might be veiled from the vulgar eye, but not such breaches of decorum as to appear on the public stage and drive a chariot in the great circus.

Finding it impossible to dissuade him, the circus in his Vatican gardens was prepared for his use—where now stands the church of St. Peter, or rather it lay to the south side of it, on the site occupied by the sacristy, and by the German College of the Campo Santo. In this he had hitherto driven with only the slaves and freedmen to look on. It was screened from the eyes of the curious by walls and by banks of cypresses. A road ran hard by it, the pavement of which lies undisturbed under the south bell-tower of the façade of the church, and along the side of this way were tombs, fragments of which have been discovered at various times in the works undertaken in St. Peter's.

As Nero was an enthusiastic devotee of the green faction, he clothed himself in green, and had the course strewn with copperas. He submitted to the training imposed on all chariot-drivers for the races down to the minutest particulars.

But Nero was by no means disposed to allow his achievements to be witnessed by his own household only. He invited his friends to become spectators, then he required youths of reduced noble families to race against him. All this was talked about in Rome, and when some servile flatterers suggested that he should exhibit in public, he seized the suggestion with eagerness, and the Circus Maximus was prepared for the occasion. Every bench was crowded, and a freedman occupied the praetor's stall, to drop a kerchief as a sign for the race to begin.

Next, all at once his caprice ran in the direction of singing. He gave concerts and recitations in the palace, in which he was the sole performer. His friends could not do him a greater favour than by inviting him to perform at banquets given in their houses. He announced that he could be hired for an evening, and one of the praetors engaged him at the price of a million sesterces to perform before his guests. But that did not suffice, he must act on the boards, and sing his part in tragedies. 'The masks he assumed were moulded to resemble his own face, or that of any woman who happened to have caught his fancy.' So he sung 'Canace in labour,' and without compunction—for he had passed the stage in which he could feel remorse—'Orestes the murderer of his mother,' and 'Hercules mad,' etc.

He considered himself a second Apollo, and, the more to resemble this god of song, he determined to have his beard shaved.

We have, happily, in the Capitoline Museum a bust of Nero taken perhaps at this time, before his beard was shorn. But he seems to have worn a beard again later, in 66-68. Dissipation had prematurely ripened him, and he looks thirty, yet he cannot have been more than one-and-twenty. In the Palatine Museum is one of him, young, with whiskers growing, before his accession of madness. That in the Capitoline Gallery shows us Nero after his brow was furrowed and his face lined with the anguish of mind he had gone through. The original was but a fragment, nevertheless the restoration aptly gives what was in the uninjured bust. The wild look of the eye, and the head turned on one side, remind us of Caius. The bust may belong to a later period, but anyhow it belongs to one when the evil spirit was on him.

He was now two-and-twenty, and his beard was to be shaved off. Whole hecatombs of victims were slain on the day on which he was shaved for the first time. The precious hair that fell under the razor was collected and placed in a case of gold set with pearls, and was conveyed in solemn procession and amidst general jubilation to the Capitol, and there offered on the altar of Jupiter. An event so important deserved commemoration through all time. Nero appointed a festival, the Juvenalia, to celebrate it. A number of invitations were sent out. All who had the slightest claim to be received at court were called together, not merely as spectators, but to assist in the festivity. Those who were in any

way capable of performing in any artistic branch practised vigorously; societies were formed for amateur theatrical performances, and those who had no particular musical or dramatic gift joined the chorus, or solicited a walking part. Neither age nor sex mattered; men, women, boys and girls, matrons and aged men, noble and common, even men of consular rank were required to strut on the stage. An old lady of wealth and rank, named Aelia Catella, offered to perform a *pas seul* in spite of her eighty years. Representatives of ancient families, men

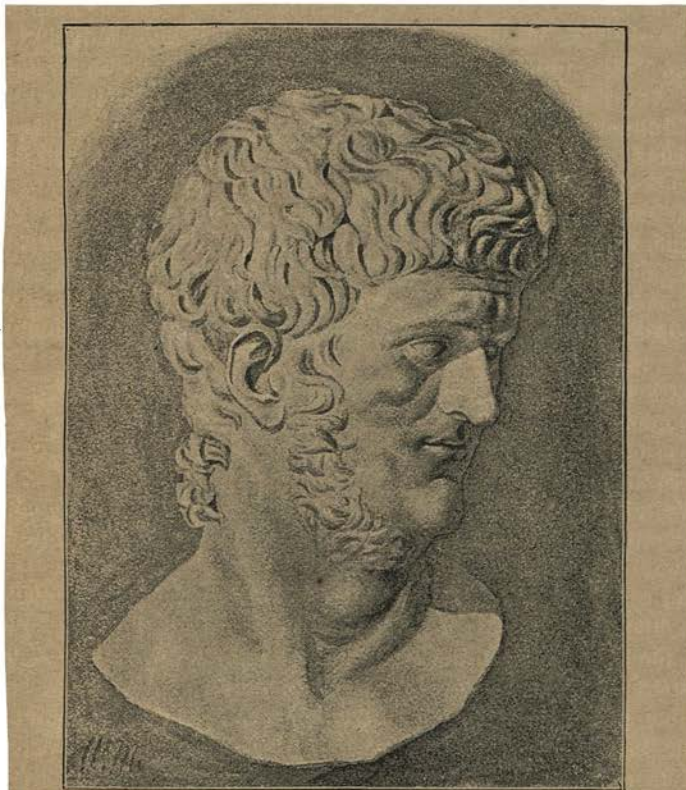


FIG. 114.—NERO. Bust in the Capitoline Museum.

occupying offices of dignity, assumed masks, afraid not to join in the mad frolic, yet blushing to be seen. Nero capered among them on the day of exhibition, and tore off the masks before the assembled crowds, comprising the rabble of Romans and barbarians assembled in the world's metropolis, thus exposing to their derision magistrates before whose courts they had stood, and public functionaries who were wont to appear in state with attendant lictors.

To accommodate the crowds five or six theatres were erected.

An elephant was made to ascend, by means of ropes, with a rider on its back to the topmost gallery of one of the theatres. Horses pranced and went through antics; gladiators slew wild beasts in the amphitheatre. Chariots raced in the circus. On the stage appeared the first nobility of Rome, playing pipes and dancing, or performing in tragedies and comedies, or, again, contesting with Nero in harping or singing, and of course succumbing before his superior powers.

Multitudes from all parts were assembled to see the chief men and ladies of Roman society make fools of themselves, with the emperor at their head. The Macedonians present picked out some clown and said, jeering, 'See—a great grandson of L. Aemilius Paulus who conquered us!' And the Greeks, laughing, said, 'There with a pipe in his mouth is a Mummius. What would old Achaicus have said to this, who plundered Athens and Corinth of their works of art, and transported them to Rome or sold them to the king of Pergamum?' And the Sicilians jeered to see a Claudius; the natives of Epirus to behold an Appius; the Spaniards to observe a Publius; and the Carthaginians to recognise an Africanus—all acting as pipers and ballet-dancers and merry-andrews on the stage. But, says Dio, 'The Romans said to themselves with shame—"These are the grandchildren of our own greatest men!"'

Nero threw among the crowd all kinds of dainties and the most costly gems; or else put tickets on balls, qualifying those who caught them in a scramble to claim horses, chariots, embroidered dresses, gold and silver vessels.

We may well believe that when this mad revelry was going on, the most worthy citizens in Rome wished they had died so as not to have seen such degradation.

But what was the climax of infamy of the whole affair in the eyes of the Romans was the performance on the boards of the emperor himself. He bade Gallio, the elder brother of Seneca, appear as herald to announce that he, the emperor, would contest the prize of the crown with any performer who would stand up against him in harp-playing and singing.

Nero appeared before the audience in the costume of a Greek minstrel, and, bowing and waving his hands, solicited the kind favour of the public. 'Gentlemen and ladies,' said he, 'pray gave me a favourable attention.' Then after a short prelude he sang the ode 'Attis' or 'The Bacchantes,' and twanged his harp and laboured to fill the theatre with the volume of his resonant tones. It was a painful moment for the audience, for the imperial voice was weak and husky, and the performance was so execrable that those who listened did not know whether to laugh or cry. It was all the same to Nero, for he had not the smallest mistrust in the strength and sweetness of his voice, and his skill in harp-playing. Seneca and Burrhus had been set as

prompters hard by, and they clapped hands and waved their garments as a sign to the audience to applaud. Seneca with stoic self-control did not let his disgust appear; but Burrhus was less schooled, and he was unable to disguise his distress under an aspect of feigned admiration. Nero had already collected together a body of devoted applauders, the Augustian youths—five thousand in number—whose function it was to serve a *claque*, and these roared out at every pause in the lamentable performance, 'Oh, the incomparable Caesar! Apollo to a hair! The Augustus, and yet surely the Pythian God! On our oath, Caesar, there is not a man who can surpass thee!'

The sightseers now adjourned to the Naumachia of Augustus, that they might witness by torchlight a combat of gladiators on ships. About midnight the emperor left the water-theatre in a barge that passed out from the arena by a canal into the Tiber, whence he was conducted to his palace.

But Nero was not satisfied yet. He would be more than a great singer, he would be celebrated as a poet also. He set to work in feverish enthusiasm to compose verses, and his boon companions did what they could with them, cut off superfluous feet and pulled out limping lines, and added verses to make sense where naught reigned in the original but wild confusion. The text was patched and scored through and through; and when published the poems exhibited on their face, says Tacitus, the traces of their origin. 'They were without fire and inspiration, and had none of that evenness that marks the production of one man.' Suetonius does not say that they were ridiculous or poor. His words are, 'Having a turn for poetry he composed verses with ease and pleasure, and did not, as some supposed, pass off those of others as his own. Several little pocket-books and loose sheets have come into my possession which contain some well-known verses in his own hand-writing, and written in such a manner that it is evident, from the blotting and interlining, that they had been composed by himself, and were not mere copies, or done from dictation.' A.U.C. 813. A.D. 60. Aet. 23.

Persius says that Nero aimed at extravagant, full-mouthed words. Some of his compositions lingered on after he was gone, and were chanted in baths and small theatres; and Apollonius of Tyana, who died not long after the death of Domitian, A.D. 96, heard a strolling singer recite the verses of Nero in Rome, imitating the action and manner of the emperor. Apollonius approved of neither the substance nor the delivery.

At the beginning of A.D. 60 Nero instituted the Neronian Games, that were to be performed every five years in imitation of the Greek contests among singers, musicians, and wrestlers; and they took place in a gymnasium he had erected for the purpose. Tacitus allows that these games passed 'without any remarkable violation of decorum;

nor did the zeal of the people break out into excesses; for though actors were restored to the stage, they were restrained from exhibiting things that were sacred. The prize of eloquence was adjudged to Caesar alone.' He, however, declined the wreath and hung it on the bust of Augustus.

At this time a comet appeared in the sky and filled men with anticipations of a change of government or of some calamity, and Nero himself seems to have been alarmed by it. He fell sick—probably he had passed into the third stage of his madness, and was again immersed in melancholy. His sickness was preceded by an act of outrageous profanity as well as indecency in the eyes of the Romans. He bathed in the sources of the Marcian water that was conveyed by aqueduct to the capital.

His recovery was marked by an act of lenity and sense, of which he was incapable when in his crazy moods. Rubellius Plautus, a quiet man, sober in his dress, blameless in conduct, and without ambition, was pointed out by the common voice as he who should succeed Nero on the throne; for he was the great-grandson of Tiberius, who was the adopted son of Augustus. A flash of lightning fell on the table at Tibur, where Nero was, and destroyed the food; some said, but that was false, that it had struck the goblet from his hand; and it was noted that Tibur was the nursery whence the paternal ancestors of Plautus sprang. A good number of hot-heads assembled and desired to form a plot for the overthrow of Nero and the elevation of Plautus.

Nero heard of this and wrote to Rubellius, 'that he would consult the peace of Rome, if he would quietly withdraw from it, and from the presence of those who were busy with his name. He had hereditary estates in Asia, and he had better pass his last days on them.' Plautus and his wife and friends accordingly retired thither.

During his illness Nero had himself spoken of Memmius Regulus as worthy to succeed him. On his recovery he left Regulus unmolested, though from what he had said, which was bruited about, eyes were turned on Memmius with expectancy.

We may gather from the silence of Tacitus that Nero was quiet, and did nothing extraordinary on his recovery. And in the beginning of the following year he again acted with moderation and clemency. The praetor Antistius had composed some scurrilous verses on the prince, and these he recited at a large convivial assembly in the house of Ostorius Scapula. He was thereupon brought to his trial, and the consul-elect moved that Antistius should be degraded from the praetorship and put to death. Then Paetus Thrasea, the dauntless man who had refused to remain in the senate when it congratulated Nero on the death of his mother, moved an amendment that he should be banished. His courage gave fortitude to others and the amendment was carried. The consuls, however, were afraid to sanction this decree, and wrote to Nero for advice.

A.U.C. 815.
A.D. 62.
Aet. 25.

He gave them full leave to entirely acquit the accused. In another case Nero acted with righteous severity. Fabricius Veiento, afterwards infamous as an informer in the reign of Domitian, had composed libellous invectives against a great number of the senators and pontiffs. These scurrilous writings 'were universally sought and read,' and passed secretly from one to another. He was accused on this charge, as also of having sold his influence with the prince for the obtaining of public offices. Nero at once determined himself to sit in judgment in this case. The charge was proved. The scandalous works were ordered to be burnt, and Veiento to be banished.

In this year the faithful old soldier Burrhus died of quinsy. 'His throat gradually swelled internally, and the passage choked, so that he was suffocated.' He was a blunt, worthy man, who had had a hard time of office lately, but had done his best in it. As an instance of his bluntness the story was told that one day having given his opinion, Nero, not catching what he said, asked for it again. Burrhus answered shortly, 'When I have said my say, don't ask me for it a second time.' After the death of Agrippina he had undertaken the protection of Octavia and had opposed her divorce. Once when Nero urged his antipathy to her, 'Very well,' said Burrhus, 'send her off, but give up her dower with her,' meaning his succession to the throne of Claudius. Nero visited him when ill, and asked how he felt. He could get no other answer from him than the laconic, 'I 'm well.' Nero sent a drug recommended by his physician for reducing the swelling, but it failed, and because it failed Nero was said to have poisoned his old tutor with it.

The loss of Burrhus was greatly felt, not only because he was universally respected, but because his place was taken immediately by one of the vilest of men, Tigellinus; a man only so far like Burrhus that he had risen from humble origin. The loss of the minister of war 'made an inroad on the influence of Seneca,' and prepared the way for his fall. Seneca had a great many enemies. His wealth excited jealousy, for he was possessed of splendid villas and extensive and beautifully laid out gardens, almost all of which had been given him in fits of reckless good-nature by his pupil. In order to rouse the suspicion of the emperor against him a host of accusations rained on Seneca. His avarice, his greed after estates, were in contravention to his philosophic principles. He had taken advantage of his intimacy with the prince to plunder him, of his position over affairs to put both hands into the treasury. His ambition was to out-blaze the sovereign. He was given to detraction of the supreme qualities of his master. He pretended to be the author himself of those eloquent effusions that flowed from the divine lips of the Augustus. He took up poetry, not because he loved the muses, but to curry favour with the prince. He tittle-tattled and told tales of what took place in the

palace. He had jeered at his master as a coachman. And then again what more unworthy for an emperor than to be accompanied everywhere by his schoolmaster, as though he were a boy still wearing the bulla?

Seneca saw the danger to which he was exposed, and he took the precaution to forestall it. He asked to be granted an audience with his sovereign, and then he thanked Nero for all the goodness he had shown to him, a student, a man of philosophy and of letters: for all the presents he had made him and which he had accepted, not that he desired such things, but because it would have been a lack of courtesy to have refused them. Now, said he, the sovereign could need him no more, and as for all his wealth, it was an encumbrance, might he pour it back into the treasury and retire into solitude himself to his beloved studies? Nero, touched with affection and regard for his old mentor, replied, 'You nursed my childhood, and you directed my youth by your moral lessons and your counsel. The favours you have bestowed on me I shall never forget; the gifts you have had from me—they are subject to the chances of fortune; great they may seem to be, but they do not exceed the possessions of many others—even freedmen and men of far inferior parts have cut a finer figure in these things than you. You have attained maturity of years and yet have not lost your vigour for business or enjoyment. I want you still as my adviser and monitor, lest I deviate from the right path, through the giddiness of youth. If you now retire and return your riches, the tongues of men will say that this is because you consider me rapacious and dread me as cruel.'

Tacitus thinks that the tears and embraces of Nero were a piece of dissimulation. Surely it was not so. Nero had nothing to gain by feigning a desire to keep Seneca by him. He was a creature of impulse, ready to gush with emotion, to feel real tenderness, and to be sincere for a moment; but there was no stability in his mood, no consideration for any one but himself, and no depth in his affection. Seneca was unable to withdraw as he desired, so he observed caution in the display of his wealth and in his reception of visitors.

During this period of recovered mental health, we hear no more of festivities, processions, dances, music, and theatrical exhibitions. The emperor had withdrawn almost entirely from public life, and spent most of his time in his villas among the mountains.

Then, towards the close of A.D. 62, he was again attacked with mental indisposition, and it took the form, not of melancholia but of fear of secret enemies. First he forgot all he had said to Seneca, and showed him cold mistrust that presaged ruin. Tigellinus was now everything to the young Caesar. Nero had made his acquaintance as a horse-dealer, had taken him into favour, and he gradually worked himself into much the position once occupied by Otho, as his second

self. And now Poppaea, to whom it seemed unaccountable that Nero should not have carried out the scheme proposed when he dyed his hands in the blood of his mother, and who had been waiting for two years to gather the fruit of the murder of Agrippina, saw no other way of gaining her end than by entering into negotiations with Tigellinus, and the two together entangled the prince completely in their net. The time was propitious, as another access of brain-disorder came on in the autumn after the death of Burrhus.

The emperor was filled with panic, fearing that he was an object of conspirators on all sides. Everywhere pretenders to the throne were starting up. His first suspicions fell on Sulla, a poor man, living in banishment at Marseilles; then on Rubellius Plautus, residing in Asia. Nero sent orders not only for their execution, but that their heads should be sent him. When they arrived, 'I did not know,' said he, 'that Sulla had grey hairs, or that Plautus had such a long nose.' The assassins of Sulla reached Marseilles in six days, we are told, and took off his head as he sat at meat. Plautus was fallen upon when stripped and taking his corporal exercises.

Now Nero resolved to divorce Octavia. To effect this Tigellinus suborned witnesses to accuse her of lightness. Her servants were tortured to extract from them something against their mistress. Some few under the stress of pain made false admissions, but the majority vindicated her honour as irreproachable. One girl, whilst on the rack, being hard pressed by questions from Tigellinus, spat in his face, and told him her opinion in a 'scathing sarcasm which clings like the shirt of Nessus to his name' (Merivale). The case broke down completely. However, Nero proceeded to divorce Octavia, and made over to her the house of Burrhus and the estate of Plautus. But soon he became uneasy, and banished her into Campania. 'This led to frequent and undisguised murmurs among the people,' says Tacitus, 'who are inconsiderate in what they say or do, and from their insignificance have nothing to fear.' These murmurs increased the alarm of Nero, and he sent to have Octavia brought back; she returned with alacrity, trusting he had come to a better mind. 'Forthwith the people ascended the Capitol in transports of joy, and poured forth their unfeigned thanks to the gods. They threw down the statues of Poppaea, bore those of Octavia on their shoulders, wreathed them with garlands, and placed them in the forum and temples. They even went so far as to offer a tribute of applause to the prince for receiving Octavia back again, and to make him the object of their grateful adoration.' The populace poured into the courts of the palace, and shouted the name of Octavia. Nero sent forth the guards to disperse them, and then he had all the statues of Poppaea set up again. That wretched woman, fearing the consequences of this demonstration of popular favour for her rival, rushed into the pre-

sence of Nero, threw herself at his feet, and appealed to his fears, then paramount in his heated brain.

'See! the people have taken up arms! All they want is a leader. Let Octavia show herself, and what will be the result, when such a riot can take place in her absence? The people clamour for her. Very well, stoop—you the prince, and obey the rabble. If they are thus audacious now, what will they show themselves when they despair of seeing Octavia recognised as the wife of Nero? What they will do is —they will give another husband to Octavia in his place.' She appealed to his tenderness. 'My circumstances are not such that I can demand a marriage, though that object is dearer to me than life. My life is jeopardised by these slaves and creatures of Octavia, who call themselves the people of Rome, and who dare to commit in times of peace violences only tolerable in war.'

Nero was ever responsive to a present influence, especially such as appealed to his fears or vanity. What was to be done? Again the infamous Anicetus stepped forward. He who had contrived the murder of Agrippina would effect that also of Octavia. He was ready to take on himself the death of the wife as well as of the mother of his master. He undertook to swear that he had himself been guilty of an intrigue with Octavia. He did so. A pretended council was held over his confession, and he was banished to Sardinia, where he was allowed full enjoyment of his wealth, and where eventually he died a natural death.

Nero immediately issued an edict in which he announced 'that Octavia had intrigued with Anicetus, the admiral, in the hopes of gaining the fleet in a conspiracy against the prince.' Then he ordered her to be banished to the isle of Pandateria, and there to be kept under guard.

Twelve days after the divorce, Nero married Poppaea. But this woman could not rest so long as Octavia lived, the darling of the Roman people, as she knew herself to be its abhorrence.

Octavia, aged but twenty, 'thrown among centurions and common soldiers,' on the barren isle of Pandateria, had not long to tarry there before the order came for her to die. 'But why?' protested Octavia, 'I am now a widow—or, if you will have it, the sister of the emperor.'[1] She appealed to the spirits of the Germanici, the ancestors of Nero, to the shade of Agrippina who had so long protected her. 'Had she lived,' sighed the poor girl, 'I might have been unhappy as a wife, but I should not have been doomed to destruction.'

She was bound fast and her veins opened; she fainted and her blood ceased to flow; so she was borne into a vapour bath and stifled in its steam. Her head was cut off and forwarded to Poppaea.

'Offerings at the temples were decreed by the fathers,' says Tacitus,

[1] Through the adoption of Nero by Claudius.

'on account of these events; a circumstance which I record in order that all those who read the calamities of these times, may conclude by anticipation, that as often as a banishment or a murder was perpetrated by the prince's orders, so often thanks were rendered to the gods; and those acts which in former times were resorted to to distinguish prosperous occurrences, were now made the tokens of public disaster.'

Have we any portraits of the unfortunate Octavia? None on medals on which we can rely. The impressions are bad and the type of face on them not the same. A Corinthian bronze represents her with hair as worn by Livia; that of Sinope gives her with hair frizzled as worn by Agrippina. The features are not sufficiently individualised to be of value, and they represent a woman much older than was the daughter of Messalina.

Yet somewhere among the numerous busts of unknown ladies—ladies emphatically of culture, and, in spite of their times and the abominations that were rampant, virtuous—that are to be found in Rome and Naples and elsewhere, there probably is a bust of Octavia, but if so, it is to be recognised or rather conjecturally attributed to her from a certain likeness traced in it to her father and to her mother. Yet I know of none such, and regret it.

Within a twelvemonth of her marriage to Nero, Poppaea presented him with a daughter; this filled him with extravagant joy. He called her Augusta, and conferred the same title on Poppaea. The child was born at Antium, the birthplace of Nero himself. The servile senate at once decreed a temple to Fecundity, and when the child died, voted her a temple, a priest and divine honours. On the birth of this babe, at the invitation of the emperor, the senate rushed headlong to Antium to offer their congratulations, only Paetus Thrasea remaining behind, he not having been included in the invitation. Afterwards Nero assured Seneca that he had made up his quarrel with Thrasea, and the philosopher congratulated him on having done so, as Thrasea was regarded as one of the most upright of men then living.

A.U.C. 816.
A.D. 63.
Aet. 26.

Nero's suspicious mood was still on him, and finding that Poppaea's son, Rufinus Crispus, was playing with other children at being an emperor he ordered the slaves to drown him whilst he was fishing. Another of his victims, Aulus Plautinus, a youth, he put to death because he suspected his mother had encouraged him to aspire to the empire, on what possible grounds none could say. The same year was marked by a short outbreak of the wildest form of his mania. The suspicion that he was an object of conspiracy passed away, and he broke out again in mad frolics, but probably not to the same extent as before, as all that can be certainly said of this period is that he gave a gladiatorial show on a large scale, indeed quite as large and sumptuous as any shown on the previous occasion, but disgraceful above the others in that ladies of rank were

induced to wrestle and fight in the arena, a thing hitherto unheard of. But the access of insanity reached its height in the following year.

Poppaea had reached the zenith of her ambition: she was empress, she had hold over the affections of Nero to the last, and could sway his mind as she liked. And yet she probably was not happy, was well aware how uncertain her position was, at the caprice of a madman who scrupled at nothing. It is with some surprise that we find Poppaea spoken of by Josephus as 'a pious woman,' which in him means one who inclined to the Jewish religion. And when we learn that after her death she was not burnt, but buried, there is some colour lent to the suspicion that the wretched woman felt remorse for her crimes, or in the terrible loneliness and peril of her position craved for something to stay up her soul, and turned an ear to the words of a Jewish physician or comedian, or perhaps to those of a Christian slave.

In A.D. 61 S. Paul was in Rome. He was living in 'his own hired house,' but in charge of the imperial guard, possibly within the precincts of Nero's palace.[1] During two years, to A.D. 63, he remained there along with S. Luke, S. Timothy, Epaphras, Aristarchus, John, Mark, and Tychicus and Demas, who shared his imprisonment, and that his teaching met with success even among the imperial guard and in the household of Nero, we know from himself.[2] It is not impossible, it is not even improbable, that some of that teaching may have reached the ear and heart of that wicked, but not utterly lost, woman, and have kindled in it one spark of 'better life.'

That Seneca was brought into connection with S. Paul was at one time supposed, owing to certain resemblances in their writing and teaching, but these are more apparent than real, and it is to the last degree improbable that the philosopher should have met the Apostle; for the latter arrived in Rome just as Seneca was withdrawing from public affairs, when his influence was on the decline and he sought to relax himself in his country villas.[3]

What is remarkable and disappointing to the historian is to find that the Epistles of S. Paul written from Rome during his residence there of three years add nothing whatever to our information as to what there transpired.

VII.—THE BURNING OF ROME.

THE year 64 was marked by Nero's mania assuming an acute form. We might have hesitated to say that the symptoms in 63 were those of madness, but the tokens of derangement in the following year are unmistakeable, and throw light on the condition of his brain in the preceding period. Now, says Tacitus, from day to day a more intense longing came over the emperor to exhibit his

A.U.C. 817. A.D. 64. Aet. 27.

[1] Phil. i. 13. [2] Phil. iv. 22.

[3] See Aubertin, *Sénèque et S. Paul*, Paris, 1872.

powers, and that before a discriminating, highly cultured public. His performances at the Juvenalia, and before the aristocracy and the mob of Rome did not suffice. What artistic appreciation had they? The Greeks gave the tone to art, they were the only truly aesthetically gifted people on earth; he would therefore submit his performances to their criticism. The applause of the Roman people was purchased, or was given in adulation, that of the Greeks would surely be granted according to judgment, and to be independent.

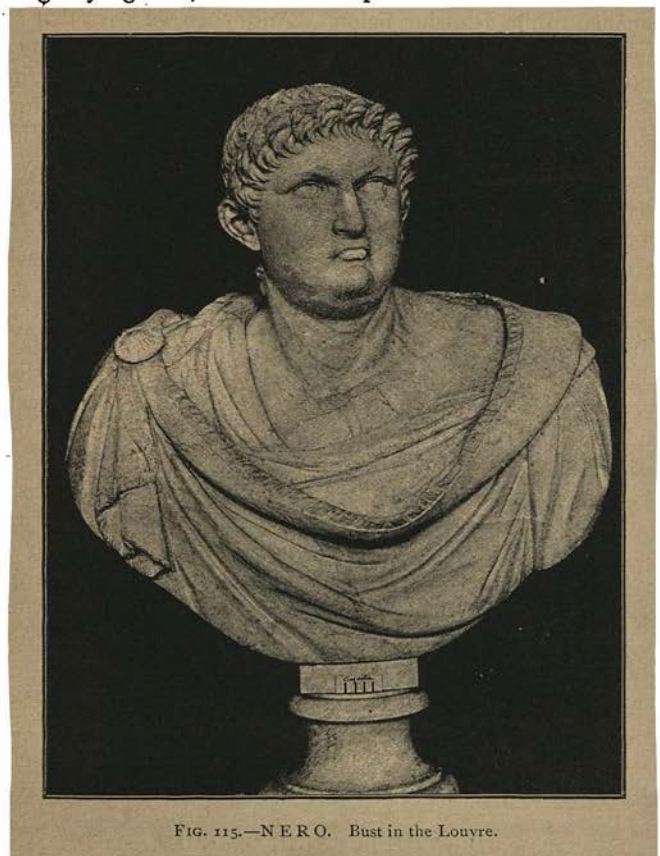


FIG. 115.—NERO. Bust in the Louvre.

'The Greeks,' said he, 'were the only people who had an ear for music, and were the only good judges of him and his attainments.'

In preparing for the ordeal he was affected with genuine nervousness. He laboured hard to acquire perfect skill and to give to his voice full tone. He practised with Terpnus from dinner till late in the night; he lay for hours on his back with a sheet of lead on his chest, he took emetics, he abstained from bread and fruit, he consumed leeks and oil; on the days before he performed he took nothing else. He practised vigorously

at dancing, and because he could not kick about his feet with the nimbleness of his master, he had the latter put to death. At length he conceived that his 'heavenly voice' had attained incomparable richness and volume, and that his skill was complete, so he sallied forth to confound the Greeks of Naples in a great concert.

A few words may here be given to Nero's personal appearance at this period. When shaved smooth he affected to resemble Apollo, and to have a voice which would enchant the world as a second Orpheus.

He was a little below middle size, without any striking deformity. His body was covered with blotches. His neck was fat and short, and indeed he was too fleshy and stout to make a figure as Apollo, and his stomach was unduly large and protruding, whilst his legs were small and short. His fair hair he wore cut in stages and arranged in short curls, but during the Greek 'tour' he wore it long, flowing down over his shoulders.

He usually wore a light kerchief round his throat, as a protection to his voice, and a loose dress ungirded.

The most particular account of his vocal powers we derive from Lucian, who, though living long after, no doubt quoted from some contemporary authority. He says that Nature had given Nero a voice of very ordinary compass, but that he was bent on straining to reach high notes, and growl out bass tones beyond his proper range. When he sang bass, the sound was muffled and like a buzzing of wasps or bees. However, this was helped out or disguised by the accompaniment, and might have passed as a tolerable performance had it been given by any one else but a sovereign. But when he would reach high notes like one of the great masters of song, then involuntarily the audience exploded into fits of laughter, however dangerous it was to do so. For he shook himself, gasped for breath, strained himself to the toe-tips to help out his high notes, made contortions like a criminal bound to the wheel, and his naturally red face turned to the colour of copper.

Thoroughly prepared to electrify the world with his song, Nero set off for Neapolis, taking with him the Augustal band of five thousand men, all handsome fellows with long locks, in gay uniform and with gold rings on their left hands, under an officer who received as his wage forty thousand sesterces, about three hundred pounds per annum. They were divided into bands: the Hummers, who buzzed approval, the Patterers, who clapped their hands, and the Clashers, who more riotously banged earthenware pot-covers together, or perhaps kicked the earthenware jars on which the seats at a theatre were raised. He was attended by a thousand baggage-carts, the mules all shod with silver, and the drivers dressed in scarlet jackets of finest Canusian cloth. A body of Africans with glittering bracelets, mounted on their jennets in splendid trappings, also attended him. Over the theatrical wardrobe was installed

Calvia Crispinilla, a noble Roman lady. As for Nero, he never wore the same garment a second time. On reaching Naples, some Alexandrians presented themselves before him, they were the inventors of a musical applause, something like the long-drawn-out Amens in fashion in churches nowadays. This so delighted Nero that the men were engaged on the spot and commissioned to drill the Augustals in this new department of applause.

Neapolis was crowded, all the great men and small from the neighbourhood, with wives and children, had poured into the place to see and hear their emperor sing and act on the boards—it was a new form of sensation altogether.

His reception was enthusiastic. He sang for whole days in succession, and hardly allowed himself time for rest. The fever of excitement and desire not to deny the audience any of what they had come to hear drove him on to the stage from his bed or from table. He did not even allow himself the time to take a bath. He had his meals served him in the orchestra, and dined and supped before the spectators, apologising to them in Greek for the pause, saying he would only drink another drop, and then treat them to something really of the first quality. Whilst he was performing, an earthquake shook the theatre, but Nero sang through it all, undisturbed, and thus evoked deafening cheers. Finally, it appeared as though the gods approved of this amateur-dramatical prince, for, after the theatre was cleared of performers and spectators, shaken by the earthquake it collapsed without injury to any one. Nero regarded this as a good omen, and, inspired by the muse of poetry, he composed and sang a hymn to the gods, thanking them for the success of this first performance.

Intoxicated with applause, Nero now resolved to visit Greece itself, and make that classic land the judge of his execution, and to strive there with the most famous artists for the crowns given in the world-famous contests.

He halted at Beneventum to witness some gladiatorial sports given there by a favourite, Vatinius. This fellow had been a cobbler's apprentice, he was deformed, hunchbacked, and had a very long nose, so that vessels with spouts took their name in derision from him, much as, long after, Bellarmine jugs were called after the Cardinal. He had a witty and sharp tongue, and had deserted the awl and wax for the boards, had become a buffoon and taken Nero's fancy. In the palace he occupied the position of court-fool, and took advantage of his position to allow himself liberties, which, in any one else, would have been resented. 'I hate you, Nero,' said he, one day. 'Why so?' 'Because you are a senator.' But he was more than a fool, he was cunning, and he managed to help himself pretty freely out of the imperial treasury, and amass a large fortune; he now resided in Beneventum, and gave a splendid entertainment to the emperor.

'In the course of time Nero sank. From Seneca he declined to the freedmen, from the freedmen to Tigellinus, from Tigellinus to Vatinius, from Vatinius to an ape' (*Wiedemeister*).

All at once, with the caprice of a madman, Nero changed his mind, and resolved to return to Rome. It is idle to inquire into reasons for this change. But no sooner was he in Rome than he was again restless to be off. His fancy was inflamed with pictures of the reception he was likely to receive in the East. But now he thought he would begin with Alexandria. Alexandria had been the first place to acknowledge the divinity of Caligula, and there probably the inspiration would come on the appreciative people to see the godhead in himself. He ordered baths to be made ready in Alexandria, and then, hearing that the son of his old nurse had bathed in them experimentally, ordered his execution for having thus desecrated them.

The day for his departure was fixed. Processions were appointed to invoke the blessing of the gods on his expedition. As Pontifex Maximus, he used his privilege to enter the temple of Vesta, where burnt the sacred fire on which the safety of Rome depended. Therein he behaved outrageously, it was supposed; for the epileptic attack that came on him the same night at table, was taken as a judgment for his profanity. He fell from his seat, just as had Britannicus, but hung to his chair by his garments and did not crash on to the floor.

Now followed a short interval of melancholy, mingled with hallucinations. The journey to Egypt was abandoned. He issued an edict in which he stated that he sacrificed his own wishes for the welfare of his beloved capital. He had seen how sad men's faces had grown when he spoke of leaving them, and how well aware he was that they looked on the presence in their midst of the head of the State as their guarantee for safety and prosperity.

But this melancholy stage was of short duration, and was followed by another fit of acute mania. It was probably in one of the accesses of this *furor* that somewhat later he kicked Poppaea, just as she was expecting to become again a mother, so that she died of the consequences.

A fever of suspicion, moreover, came upon him, and many lives were sacrificed to it. D. Junius Silanus Torquatus, who had been consul in A.D. 53, was impeached 'because he was prodigal in bounties, and had no other resource for recruiting his impaired fortunes but revolution.' He was sacrificed in reality because he was the son of Aemilia Lepida, and could therefore claim descent from Octavia, the sister of the first emperor.

In order to make plain to all Rome that he enjoyed himself nowhere so thoroughly as in the capital, Nero had a wondrous banquet contrived in the lake of Agrippa, the low portion of Rome by the Pantheon, easily flooded by the Tiber. Here he had wine-barrels put in the water, and a platform laid on them, upon which tables and

couches were placed; boats covered with ivory and gold were linked to the floating raft, and towed it about on the lake, whilst Nero and his guests supped on this raft on 'fowl and venison brought from afar, and sea-fish from the ocean.' Such crowds assembled to see the sight that many were trampled under foot, and crushed to death, in getting in and out of the taverns erected on the banks in which any one might drink of the best wines, and drink himself drunk, at the emperor's expense.

The crazy condition of the brain of Nero was even more clearly manifest in the great fire that took place soon after midsummer, and laid three quarters of Rome in ashes. On the night of the 19th July the fire broke out in the wooden sheds near the Circus Maximus—where are at present the gas-works—and where were stored large quantities of spices, oil, and various condiments, all combustibles, ready to ignite and spread the flames. The summer had been hot and dry, and a light air carried the flames over the whole quarter of wooden shops and stores. The *triumviri nocturni*, the watchmen of the city against such accidents, were nowhere to be seen; the conflagration rapidly grew; men were engaged in saving their own domestic treasures, no one tried to arrest the spread of the fire. The description given by Dio is even more graphic than that of Tacitus. He assumes what was conjectured, that Nero purposely had the city set on fire. 'He sent secretly people to different quarters, pretending to be drunk, or to be engaged on some prank. They set fire to one, then two, finally many houses, so that folk did not know which way to turn, as they could not strike at the seat of the mischief, and know how to grapple with it. Nothing was to be seen but fires in all directions, as in a camp, and naught heard but cries of "Here it blazes! There it blazes! Where did you say? Who is the incendiary? How came it about? Help!" All was in the wildest confusion. Men ran hither and thither; some sought to extinguish the conflagration, and whilst so engaged in one place received news that their own houses in another quarter were blazing. Some never heard that their own houses were on fire till they lay in ashes. Some ran out of their doors into the streets, to extinguish the flames from without; others burst into the houses to set them on fire. All shrieked and cried—men, women, children, old folks, in one vast confusion of sound, so that nothing could be distinguished for the noise, as nothing could be seen clearly for the smoke. Some stood silent and in despair. Many were engaged in rescuing their effects, whilst others were hard at work plundering. Men ran against each other, and quarrelled over what was drawn out of the burning houses; the crush swayed this way, that way, men thrust, and were thrust over. Many were trampled down, and every sort of wretchedness was to be seen; when one had escaped a danger of one sort, next moment he plunged into another of a different description, and was lost. This did not happen

on one day only, it lasted several nights and days. Many houses became a prey to flames, because no one would help to extinguish them; others were burnt because those who ought to have assisted were engaged spreading the conflagration; for the soldiers and watch men did nothing for putting out the flames, they were occupied in plundering, and indeed sought to extend the fire.

'Whilst this was going on at different points, a wind arose and spread the flames over the whole city. No one any longer thought of saving goods and houses; from a point of vantage, the city looked like several islands or towns in conflagration. None now lamented their individual losses; all wailed over the general ruin, and lamented the fate of the commonwealth.'

Tacitus adds that the wretched people 'not knowing what to shun, or where to seek sanctuary, crowded the streets, and lay along in the open fields. Some, having lost all their substance, even the means of earning their daily bread; others, also despairing through the loss of their families, suffered themselves to perish in the flames, though they might have escaped. Neither dared any man offer to check the fire, so repeated were the threats of many who either openly threw fire-brands —asserting they were authorised so to do—or else hindered all attempts to master the flames.'

But it was uncertain, Tacitus admits, whether these incendiaries acted by order, or out of love of plunder. Nero was at Antium at the time—his native place—but hearing of the fire he came to Rome, and viewed the terrible yet magnificent scene from the highest point of the palace, united to the garden of Maecenas on the Esquiline Hill, the tower of Maecenas, the height 'molem propinquam nubibus arduis,' which Horace had sung, as well as the prospect from it (Carm. iii. 29). Excited by the spectacle, he dressed himself in some of his dramatic costume, and taking his lyre chanted the verses of Homer, descriptive of the destruction of Troy.

The conflagration lasted six days and seven nights. When it was in a measure got under, it broke out again in the gardens of Tigellinus, and continued three days longer. It was whispered that some one having in conversation with Nero quoted the line—

'When I am dead, let fire the world consume,'

Nero had abruptly answered, 'Nay, we will have it whilst I am alive.' He had often complained of the narrow and winding streets; and coupling the known disposition of the tyrant with these reported sayings, the populace convinced itself that he had purposely fired the city that he might rebuild it and call it after his own name. Near his palace were granaries, and it was told that he had catapults discharged against them to heighten the semblance of a siege, and finally had them set on fire by his own servants armed with tow, and consumed along with all their stores of grain.

When on the sixth day the conflagration was stayed at the foot of the Esquiline by the pulling down of an immense quantity of buildings, when the Carinae, the place of residence of the knights in former times, and a fashionable quarter, had been demolished, then the flames were arrested; but only to break out again and rage for three more days in another quarter, as already mentioned.

It must be admitted that Nero acted with promptness and intelligence after the magnitude of the disaster was realised. 'For the relief of the people, left without habitation, he threw open the Field of Mars, and the monumental edifices erected by Agrippa, and even his own gardens (the Vatican). He likewise reared temporary houses for the reception of the forlorn multitude; and from Ostia and the neighbouring cities household necessaries were brought by water, and the price of grain was reduced to three sesterces the measure.'

Of the fourteen regions of the capital, only four remained unconsumed. In the rest there was either total destruction, or a few scorched and shattered ruins stood up above the ashes. 'The treasures accumulated by so many victories,' says Tacitus, 'the beautiful productions of Greek artists, ancient writings of celebrated authors, up to this time preserved entire, were now all consumed.'

It can never be decided whether Nero really caused the city to be fired, or whether the conflagration was due to accident. 'Psychologically conceivable, pathologically possible is it,' says Dr. Wiedemeister, 'that a maniacal emperor should have burned his old capital that he might rebuild it in greater splendour.' And Suetonius assures us that at the close of his reign he formed the scheme of again committing the rebuilt Rome to the flames, and of turning loose the wild beasts of the amphitheatre on the inhabitants, so as to produce a scene of wilder horror than the first. The impatience of a maniac would find the systematic reconstruction of the old city too slow. A good brisk fire would sweep it clear in a very brief period. As for compassion for the ruined people, and regret for the loss of treasures of art, such we must not look for in a man in his mental condition. However, the certainty that the conflagration originated with him is not proved. But that matters not; it is sufficient for us to know that whilst the city was a prey to flames, the emperor comported himself as a madman, and with maniacal extravagance schemed the replacing of his scorched *Domus transitoria*. He effected this in the construction of his *Domus aurea*.'

It is possible that the idea of the fire may have been suggested to him—supposing he did order it—by a play that had been enacted before him, composed by Africanus, in which the burning down of a house had been represented on the stage, with such reality that a real conflagration was produced, and the spectators were shown the inhabitants escaping through the windows and saving the furniture. Suetonius tells us that all the furniture and articles rescued from the burning house

were given to the actors who carried them off. It was during his former access of mania that he had seen this play. Now in the second maniacal fit, Rome was burnt, and popular opinion believed him to have brought it about.

It was, moreover, a significant fact that this fire of Rome took place precisely on the same day on which Rome had once before been burnt by the Gauls, a possibly accidental occurrence, but which might be more easily explained by such a theatrical madman straining to add effect to the tragedy.

Whether truly or falsely, the accusation was made, and Nero could not but perceive that the heart of the people was turned against him. It was in vain that he promised to rebuild their houses in a better manner, to indemnify the sufferers for their losses. It was in vain that the gods were addressed with prayer to mitigate the distress of the people, and were offered holocausts to turn away their anger; that the Sibylline books were consulted for expiations, and Juno propitiated by processions of Roman matrons, and by the sprinkling of her image with sea-water to cool her supposed resentment against the city. The sullen people continued to mutter imprecations against the 'incendiaries,' and though naming none, the significance of their looks could not be mistaken. Nero thought it advisable—or Tigellinus considered it so—that popular suspicion should be diverted into another channel. To effect this, Nero, says Tacitus, 'falsely charged with the guilt, and punished with the most exquisite tortures, the persons commonly called Christians, who were hated for the abominations they practised.' These men were looked upon with suspicion and dislike; they abstained from the circus and the theatre, would take no part in the riotous festivities that were given by the emperor, and they worshipped as their God one who had died on the Cross, a man guilty of high treason, for he had given himself out to be a King. When Tiberius retired from Roman society and hid himself quietly in Capreae, society avenged itself on him by inventing the most disgusting stories of his conduct in his retreat. So now the Romans resented the withdrawal of the Christians from the sanguinary scenes of the arena and the licentious performances on the boards, and declared that in their secret assemblies these sectaries were guilty of the most monstrous rites, sanguinary and obscene. They were declared to be inspired by an *odium generis humani*, to hold a 'pernicious superstition,' and to deserve death. The suspicion of the emperor was doubtless likewise kindled against them, because they met together in private, and he mistrusted all gatherings of guilds and societies as nests of sedition. Moreover, it was known that the Christians looked forward to the destruction of the world by fire, and had often spoken of it and threatened it. Was it not likely that, disappointed at the non-fulfilment of this prophecy, they had attempted to give it accomplishment in part by destroying the capital? So their

conduct could be represented to the people, and the anger of the citizens of Rome, bereft of their homes, be turned on the Christians instead of on Caesar.

'Accordingly, first those were seized who confessed themselves to be Christians; next, on their information, a vast multitude were convicted, not so much on the charge of burning the city, as of hating the human race. And in their deaths they were also made the subjects of sport, for they were covered with the hides of wild beasts and worried to death by dogs, or nailed to crosses, or set fire to, and, when day declined, burnt to serve for nocturnal lights.'

The First Epistle of St. Clement, written some thirty-five or six years later, alludes to some of the martyrs of this period: women, who like the Danaides, were given over to outrage; others, like Dirce, who were fastened to wild bulls and dragged to death; 'and after they had suffered terrible and unspeakable torments, finished the course of their faith with steadfastness, and though weak in body received a noble reward.'

Tacitus was a boy of about seven years old at this period; he may have been taken to see the spectacle which Nero now gave to emphasise his resolution to represent the Christians as the authors of the conflagration. As they had burnt the city, they should be burnt themselves. He announced a great show at night in the circus in the gardens. These beautiful gardens at the foot of the Vatican Hill that folded round them was reached by the bridge Nero had built for his own convenience,[1] or by the long road, the via Septimiana from the Aemilian bridge. The gardens were adorned with statues, temples, fountains, baths, and porticoes.

In the cool summer night when a thousand fire-flies fluttered like wandering stars about the gardens, and clustered on the palm-leaves as threads of gems, suddenly numerous torches flared up in the circus, and the people rushed together to occupy every seat in the illuminated racecourse. There, through the whole length of the arena, stood stakes planted in the soil, with human beings—Christians—fastened to them, the sharp spikes under their chins. They were wrapped in papyrus, and in tow steeped in pitch and wax. To the flare of these living torches, and the shrieks of the sufferers piercing above the noise of musical instruments, Nero issued forth in his green costume, on an ivory chariot, and drove on the gold sand round the circus, attended by trains of Bacchantes and nymphs, waving wreaths and scattering incense.

These outrages on humanity exasperated Seneca, who had withdrawn to his villa, and in his fourteenth Epistle he writes in indignation at the atrocities committed. Tyranny, personified by the monster Nero, had steel and flame in hand, chains, and a host of wild beasts accompanying her. Conceive, he says, of prison, and cross, and rack, the

[1] Now in process of reconstruction.

iron hook, and a stake driven through a man and issuing from his mouth, of limbs broken under chariot wheels, of garments steeped in combustibles, and delivered over to the flames—of every horror the most savage imagination can devise. Tacitus also, though hostile to the Christians, admits the bad impression produced by this exhibition. Pity, he says, was roused for the sufferings of these people, although they richly deserved their punishment, for it was well understood that they fell victims not to the common welfare, but to the murderous lust of one monster.

After this horrible outbreak there followed a period of exhaustion; the reaction set in, and acute mania passed away, to be succeeded by melancholia. 'The exitial stage of the second, and the initial stage of the third, attack, seem not to have been separated by any intervening period of saneness; at all events, we have no chronological data given us by the historians that can enable us to assert it.'

Nero retired from Rome and hid himself at Baiae. There he bathed and took his meals alone, without guards and without court. When he was in Rome he lived in retreat in his palace, did not show himself, and took exercise in his garden.

Meanwhile the reconstruction of Rome was proceeded with, with the utmost rapidity, according to the directions of the best architects; and at the same time Nero's Golden house was erected, and its grounds laid out on a plan of sumptuousness and size never surpassed.

The palaces of Augustus, Tiberius, and Caius, on the Palatine were united with the villa of Maecenas on the Esquiline, and the Caelian Hill was included in the park. Within the vast enclosure were groves, aviaries, vineyards, fountains, collections of wild and of tame beasts. Where is now the Colosseum was a great lake, and to give it the appearance of being something beyond a mere pond, Nero had houses grouped on its banks to represent towns and villages. Salt water was brought all the way from Ostia, and sea-fish were induced to swim in it. In splendid stalls stood the horses with which he raced, adorned with purple cloths, as though they were senators; and horses that had deserved well, received their monthly pensions. Asturco, his favourite mount, had its own palace and attendants. Not less comfortably provided for was the pet ape of Nero. For himself, says Tacitus, he founded a palace in which the old-fashioned and then common ornaments of gold and precious stones were not so much regarded as the lakes and gardens.

Above his lake stood the temple of Claudius, erected by Agrippina. He tore it down, and on noble arches brought the Aqua Claudia to a fall, down which in jets, and shoots, and foam and spray—something after the fashion of the waters of Trevi, but on a vastly larger scale—the Claudian stream discharged itself into his lake. Almost the only remains of Nero's vast building—certainly the finest fragments—are

those of this aqueduct that led to his fountains, now enclosed within the convent of the Passionist fathers on Monte Celio.

The Romans scoffed at the unprecedented extent of his enclosure, and spread about a lampoon—

'All Rome will be one house; to Veii fly,
And perhaps to Veii next 'twill reach.'

'In parts,' says Suetonius, 'this house was entirely overlaid with gold and adorned with jewels and mother-of-pearl. The supper-rooms were vaulted, and compartments of the ceilings, inlaid with ivory, were made to revolve and scatter flowers; moreover they were provided with pipes which shed essences on the guests. The chief banqueting-room was circular, and revolved perpetually, night and day, in imitation of the motion of the celestial bodies. The baths were supplied from the sea and from Albula. Upon the dedication of this magnificent house, when finished, all Nero said in approval of it was, "Well, now at last I am housed as a man should be."'

VII.—THE PISONIAN CONSPIRACY.

WITHOUT a lucid interval, Nero plunged from one access of frenzy into another. For a while the theatrical craze was thrust into the background by homicidal mania.

In the early spring a comet flared in the sky, and excited the terrors of Nero. He was at the villa of C. Piso at Baiae, but returned to Rome for the Circensian games, that were performed from the 12th to the 19th of April. A.U.C. 818. A.D. 65. Aet. 28.

He had been living very much at his ease, without guards, but now suddenly a panic seized him, and he drew a cordon of military about his person, declared the city in a state of siege, had the walls manned by soldiers, roads, river, and sea patrolled night and day; mansions, villas, country towns, searched by guards, amongst whom were introduced numerous Germans, as the suspicious madman feared the soldiers drawn from Italy.

The excuse for these measures was this:—

Flavius Scaevinus, a senator, had made his will, which was attested by a friend, Antonius Natalis, and sealed. At the same time he manumitted several of his slaves. That same evening, observing that an old family relic—a dagger, preserved in his bedroom—was rusty, he gave it to a slave, Milichus, and bade him apply it to the grindstone. He sat down to supper, but was not in his usual spirits, as is not to be wondered at, having just executed his will. Now Milichus was angry and dissatisfied, because he had not been given his liberty, and at night he grumbled over this to his wife. She at once represented to him that he had in his hands the means of revenge on his master. Let him go

to the emperor and declare that Scaevinus meditated his assassination. Milichus jumped at the suggestion, found a ready reception, and the train was fired that destroyed vast numbers of persons supposed to be implicated in the plot. Nero, alarmed at the comet hanging over Rome, had consulted an astrologer, Babilus, as to what it portended, and had received the reply that it portended the death of certain eminent persons in the state. Nero seized on the opportunity afforded him by

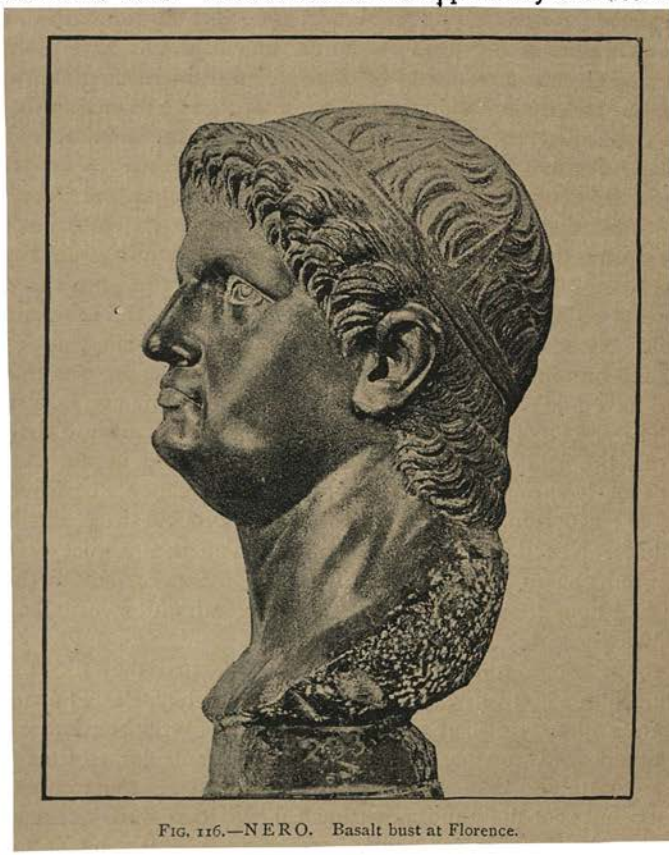


FIG. 116.—NERO. Basalt bust at Florence.

the revelation of the slave to proceed to the slaughter of some of the noblest of the Romans, so as to avert the menace of the star from himself.

It is a question that cannot be solved, whether a conspiracy really existed or not. Tacitus, Dio, and Suetonius, speak of it as having had some actual foundation; but Tacitus admits that a great many persons disbelieved in it, and thought it to have been fabricated, and 'that Nero had wrought the destruction of blameless men from motives of jealousy or fear.' Tacitus, however, states that those who were banished, and

returned after the death of Nero, asserted that there was a conspiracy. The senate was dissatisfied, the army disgusted, the empire impatient at the rule of a comedian, and desired a change. They felt that Rome was dishonoured in the person of Nero, and the pride in the dignity of Rome made all disposed to unite to shake off the incubus of the bad dream of Nero's rule.

But nothing much further than discontent and talk of a change can have existed; for, according to all accounts, C. Calpurnius Piso, set by the conspirators at the head of the movement, would have nothing to say to it. He was a man who belonged to a distinguished and wealthy family, but had no ambition beyond winning a game of dice or draughts. No two so-called conspirators, when put to the question, agreed as to the plans devised. According to one story, Nero was to be attacked and assassinated on the stage; according to another, the intention of the conspirators had been to waylay him among the passages of the palace during the conflagration of Rome—a statement bearing absurdity on the face of it, unless it were also part of the plot to burn the capital. According to another, again, a man of great strength, Lateranus, was to hold Nero down by his robes at the Circensian games, whilst others fell on him. Another version of the story, again, was that Nero was to have been assassinated at Baiae, and would have been so, had not Piso objected to it as an infringement of the rights of hospitality. Nor was the story of the dagger of Scaevinus told in the same way. According to one version it was an ancestral weapon, cherished as an heirloom; according to another it was one brought from the Temple of Salus. Nor was it at all settled to whom the empire was to be transferred. Some said to Piso, others to Seneca, and in a vague manner Antonia, the daughter of Claudius, and widow of Sulla, was an object of thought.

Tacitus alone gives us the details of the trials of those brought before Nero's camarilla, that consisted of himself, Poppaea, and Tigellinus, and from what he tells us, it appears probable that there was widespread dissatisfaction, that there were heartfelt desires for the death of the tyrant, and that suggestions were started relative to a change of dynasty, but that nothing was settled. Now 'there were incessant trains of chained prisoners haled along, and were kept waiting at the gates of the (Servilian) gardens; and when brought in to make their defence, it was found sufficient proof of guilt if any of these had smiled at meeting any of the conspirators—nay, even had spoken to them by chance, or had sat with them at the same table as guests, or had occupied the same bench at a public show.'

When one after another was dragged to the tribunal in Nero's palace, and subjected to torture, it became common for them to turn fiercely on their accusers and denounce them, and Lateranus was commended as differing from the rest in receiving his death-blow in silence

and not denouncing his delator. One woman showed courage that shamed men. Lucan, the poet, nephew of Seneca, moved by terror and hopes of pardon, gave up the names of many innocent persons, that of his own mother included; but the woman Epicharis, charged with having sounded Proculus, chiliarch in the fleet at Misenum, relative to the temper of the sailors, was tortured in vain. 'Neither stripes, nor fire, nor the rage of her tormentors—ashamed to be defeated by a woman—could overcome her constancy. The first day of torture passed without producing any effect on her. On the day following, as she was being brought back to suffer the same agonies, riding in a chair—for, all her members were dislocated so that she could not support herself—she took off the girdle that was round her waist, made of it a noose, tied it to the canopy of the chair, put her neck in it, and hung herself. Thus she set an example, though only a freedwoman, of perishing rather than denounce others, and these strangers, almost unknown to her. Whereas, free-born persons, men, Roman knights and senators, before they were subjected to torture, were ready to betray their nearest and dearest.'

It would seem that even those who were engaged in the executions were uneasy. Fenius Rufus, captain of the guard, was confident in his security, and when another praetorian officer, Subrius Flavius, made a sign to him whether it would not be well to draw the sword and make an end to the butchery by slaying Nero, he shook his head. Shortly after he himself was accused by one of the victims and had to die.

When Fenius was charged with treason, he naturally adduced this as an instance of his fidelity; but it availed him nothing. At last, despairing of life, he said: 'Yes, I hate you. I did love you, and no soldier was more true to you when you deserved respect. But when you murdered your mother, then your wife, turned coachman, stage-player, and finally incendiary, I came to hate you.'

Nothing, says Tacitus, that any of the victims said made Nero wince as did these words of the blunt praetorian. When Fenius was bidden boldly extend his neck for the sword, 'Ay,' said he to the executioner, 'do thou strike as boldly.' When the man who had struck off his head returned to Nero, the tyrant asked if he had dealt the fatal blow. 'Yes,' answered the executioner, 'I finished him with a blow and a half.'

When Sulpicius Asper, a centurion, was brought before Nero and charged with meditating the death of the prince, 'I could not do you a better turn,' said the soldier, 'than cut short your dishonour.'

M. Vestinus Atticus was consul. None of those implicated had thought of accusing him; nevertheless Nero resolved on his destruction. Atticus was at supper, he had invited many friends, when suddenly the house was surrounded, and a tribune entered the dining-room and told him that he was expected to die. He retired to his

chamber, summoned his physician, his veins were opened, and he bled to death in his bath. Meanwhile, his guests were kept under guard in the supper-room till the night was far spent, when Nero, 'having pictured to himself and passed his jokes upon the terror of the men starting from table and expecting death, signified that they might go, "having paid dear enough for their consular supper."'

Piso bled himself to death, leaving a will full of expressions of respect for Nero, and love for his wife—who, if Tacitus may be trusted, did not deserve it.

Seneca was the next victim. He had been in Campania, and was returning to Rome, but rested on his way in his villa at Nomentanum, when it was surrounded with soldiers, and the tribune entered as he sat at meat with his wife, Paullina, and two friends. He denied all privity in the plot. This was conveyed to Nero, who merely answered that he required Seneca to commit suicide. The tribune, disconcerted, on leaving the emperor consulted his commanding officer what was to be done, and was told to obey the imperial orders; a significant incident, for it shows how discontent had spread and sapped the allegiance of the soldiery. 'And this,' says Tacitus, 'prevailed universally.' Even when the tribune arrived at Nomentanum, he would not communicate the order in person to Seneca, but commissioned a centurion to convey it to the philosopher.

'Seneca, undismayed, called for tables to make his will; but as the centurion forbade this, he turned to his friends and said, "as I am debarred requiting your services, I leave you what alone remains to me—the example of my life." Then he sought to repress their tears and restore their fortitude, now by soothing language, then by using terms of rebuke, asking them where were the precepts of philosophy he had taught? Where the rules of conduct he had laid down? Who was unapprised of the ferocious disposition of Nero? What was to be expected of the man who had murdered mother and brother but that he should proceed to destroy his old tutor who had been as a father to him? Then Seneca embraced his wife; and after a brief but vigorous effort to master the qualms that pressed on him at that moment, he implored her to refrain from giving way to boundless grief, and to seek the consolation afforded by the contemplation of his virtuous life. Paullina, however, entreated to be allowed to die with him, and called for the executioner. Then Seneca, unwilling to hinder her purpose, both as glorious and also because he was uneasy for her future, exposed to the hard usage of the world, said to her, "I have pointed out to you how to soften the ills of life, but you prefer the renown of death. I do not grudge it you. Though we both die bravely, yours is the most glorious death."

'After this, both had the veins of their arms opened with the same stroke. As the blood flowed slowly from the aged body of Seneca,

attenuated by his spare vegetable diet, he had the veins of his legs and thighs also cut; and unable to bear up under the excessive pain,[1] lest by his own sufferings he should overpower the resolution of his wife, and lest he should be betrayed into impatience by witnessing her anguish, he advised her removal into another apartment. His eloquence continued to flow to the last moment of his life, and, summoning his secretaries, he dictated many things to them.

'Nero bore no personal dislike to Paullina, and, to avoid inflaming public abhorrence of his cruelty, he ordered her death to be prevented. At the instance of the soldiers, her slaves and freedmen bound up her arms, and stanched the blood, but whether with her concurrence, is uncertain. Ill-natured people naturally said that she aimed at the applause of sharing her husband's death so long as she thought Nero's wrath implacable, but when convinced to the contrary she yielded to the attractions of life. But she gained thereby only a few years, ever cherishing a laudable recollection of her husband, whilst her face and limbs exhibited such deadly paleness that it was plain the vital energy had been drained away. Seneca meanwhile, as his blood flowed but slowly and death stole on lingeringly, asked his friend and physician, Statius Annaeus, to administer hemlock. When this was brought he took it, but it was in vain, his limbs being now cold, and his body insensible to poison. At length he had recourse to a warm-water bath, whence he besprinkled the slaves nearest him, saying that of this liquid he made a libation to Jupiter the Deliverer. From thence he was conveyed into a hot room and there suffocated with steam. His body was burnt without any funeral solemnity; for so he had directed in his will, having apparently foreseen his end even whilst in the plenitude of wealth and influence.'

There are busts, full of vigour and character, at Naples, in Florence, and elsewhere, of a man with eager, intelligent face, old, thin, with disordered hair and beard, that have long been supposed to represent Seneca, because of the likeness of the profile to one on a medal formerly in the possession of Cardinal Maffei, that bore the title of M. Annaeus Seneca on it. But unfortunately this medal is lost, so that it is not possible now to determine whether it was genuine.

In the Berlin Museum is a double Hermes representing on one side Socrates, on the other a bald-headed philosopher of not very interesting appearance, stout and bullet-headed. On these busts are cut the names of Socrates and Seneca, but cut not on the pedestals, but on the busts themselves, and, though the inscriptions are ancient, they are probably not of the same date as the busts themselves. Nevertheless, it is hardly likely that any other philosopher could have been intended by the sculptor to be set back to back with Socrates, and we may therefore regard the bronze Herculaneum bust and that at Florence as repre-

[1] Bleeding to death would produce agonising cramps.

senting some Greek, possibly Plato or Aristotle, but certainly not as the portrait of Seneca.

Another victim of this terrible year of butchery was Lucan, the nephew of Seneca, who did not save his life by his false denunciation of accomplices. He died in the same manner as his uncle, reciting with his last breath some lines of his own in the *Pharsalia*. Senecio, the friend from boyhood of the emperor, his companion in his early frolics, was also put to death; and many were banished and their estates confiscated. 'The children of those who had been condemned,' says Suetonius, 'were driven from the city, and afterwards either poisoned or starved to death. It is asserted that some of them, with their tutors and the slaves who carried their satchels, were all poisoned together at one dinner; and that others were not suffered to seek their daily bread.'

Then Suetonius goes on to say: 'From this period he butchered, without distinction or quarter, all whom his caprice suggested as objects for his cruelty, and upon the most frivolous pretences.' But as Tacitus informs us that a terrible pestilence raged in and about Rome at this time, 'sweeping away every living thing, and filling the houses with the dead and the streets with funerals,' it is probable that a good many if not all those whom the popular opinion declared to have been poisoned, fell in reality victims to the plague.

The butcheries were abruptly stopped in the most unexpected manner.

A certain crazy Carthaginian named Cesellius Bassus, who suffered from hallucinations, managed by bribery to obtain an audience with the emperor. Access to the person of Nero was difficult, so strictly was he hedged round with guards; however, Bassus surmounted all difficulties and succeeded in speaking to Nero himself, and informed him that 'on his estate in Africa had been discovered a cavern of vast extent, containing an incalculable amount of gold, not coined, but in shapeless masses. In one part of the cave lay gold blocks, in another stood bars of the shining metal. This was no doubt the treasure of Phoenician Dido, hidden there on her flight from Tyre.' One cracked brain inflamed the other, and without the slightest misgivings Nero made ready to send to Carthage and carry off the treasure. He did not think it worth while despatching men to test the truth of the story. He was elated at the prospect of the enormous wealth that was to pour into his treasury, and his extravagance, encouraged by these chimerical anticipations, became more excessive than ever. The Quinquennial games he had instituted were in course. It was five years since last celebration, but now his attention was distracted from the games to the prospect of acquiring the buried gold. A flotilla of warships was equipped and sent to bring home the treasure. Vast numbers of peasants were hired to dig the soil in search, under the supervision of Roman soldiers. Bassus pointed out the spot where it lay; but nothing could

be found. A second, then a third, spot was indicated, still nothing turned up under the spade and pick. Finally the entire estate was dug up, all to no purpose. It yielded nothing save stones. Bassus in despair and disappointment destroyed himself. Meanwhile, Nero was singing and strumming on the boards at Rome, and the minstrels who stood up with him chanted of the vast stores of gold that were coming to Rome. It was the theme of all their recitations, it was the talk of all the people, and it was the mockery of the wise. Nero emptied the treasury, scattering the money among the actors and singers, and the people who applauded him, in perfect confidence that the treasury would be speedily replenished. His expectations were dashed by the return of the fleet with empty holds, and immediately after, to his frantic despair, Poppaea died, in consequence of a kick he gave her in one of his fits of insane passion, shortly before she expected again to become a mother.

Her body was embalmed, not burnt, and laid in the tomb of the Julian family, and such a prodigious quantity of spices was burnt on the occasion, that Pliny says all Arabia did not produce in an entire year as much as was consumed on this occasion. Whether the peculiar deviation from 'the rites of the Romans' was due to Poppaea having been won over to the Jewish religion, or whether it was merely due to a caprice of Nero, is uncertain, but probably the latter was the case.

The disappointment of Nero at the failure of his hopes of raising a treasure at Carthage, combined with distress at having lost Poppaea, drove him into a second frenzy of murder. On the day of her funeral he sent orders to C. Cassius Longinus, a blind old lawyer, to forbid his attendance at it, and soon after he ordered his banishment because Longinus had in his house a bust of C. Cassius, his ancestor, the murderer of Julius Caesar, and it was inscribed 'the leader of the party.' Lucius Silanus, nephew of D. Torquatus Silanus whom he had put to death the year before, was banished, and a centurion sent after him to require him to commit suicide. The young man refused, and when fallen upon by the centurion and the soldiers defended himself with his naked hands till he fell, covered with wounds. Lucius Antistius Vetus and his mother-in-law, Sextia, and his daughter, Pollutia, widow of Rubellius Plautus, were ordered to die for no other reason than that they lamented the death of the worthy Plautus. Pollutia made a desperate effort to save her father by going to Naples and endeavouring to obtain access to the emperor; but it was in vain. She returned to tell her father that the monster was inaccessible to entreaty or remonstrance. Some persuaded Vetus—who, by the way, had been colleague with Nero in the consulship of A.D. 55—to bequeath to Nero the bulk of his estate, so that what remained might be allowed to pass to his grandchildren; but the worthy man declined the suggestion, as savouring of servility to a despicable tyrant. He distributed all his ready money among his servants, and bade them carry off everything portable in the

house, reserving only three couches for the funeral rites. They then opened their veins 'with the same knife, in the same chamber, each covered modestly with one robe only. They were then carried to the baths, the father's eyes fixed upon his daughter, the grandmother's upon her granddaughter, and hers upon both, each praying with rival fervour for a quick and easy passage for the soul, and to leave the others alive, though soon to follow. Fate followed the order of nature. Life was first extinguished in the elder, then in her who was as yet young.'

Other victims followed with the opening of the new year, Publius Anteius and Ostorius Scapula, the latter the son of the gallant general, and who had himself won a civic crown for having saved the life of a Roman soldier in Britain. A.U.C. 819. A.D. 66. Aet. 29.

It is unnecessary to mention the names of more than a few of the most conspicuous victims who fell in this new access of cruelty and fear. Petronius, like Senecio, had been one of Nero's old comrades in boyish frolic. But among maniacs it is always noticed that they conceive the greatest suspicion against such as they have best loved and been with most intimately. It was so now. Petronius had been master of the sports to Nero, he was a witty, dissolute fellow, yet not without power of applying himself to business. On hearing that he was to die, he made presents to his slaves who deserved reward, and caused others to be punished who merited chastisement. He had his veins opened, then bound up and opened again; sat down to a plentiful supper, sealed a long narrative of the enormities committed by Nero of which he was witness, sent it to the tyrant, and then broke his signet lest it should be used in the fabrication of false evidence that might bring others to their death. As life ebbed, he revived for a moment to dash to pieces a costly murrhine vase, which he remembered that Nero had admired, and which he believed the prince purposed securing on his death.

'Nero at length,' says Tacitus, 'sought to destroy Virtue itself, in the persons of Paetus Thrasea and Barea Soranus.'

Paetus Thrasea had risen from his seat, when the senate had decreed thanksgivings to the gods for the murder of Agrippina, and had left the senate without giving his vote. He held aloof in disgust from the brutal and frivolous spectacles given by Nero, though ready to assist in his native city of Patavium in its harmless revelries. When the senate would have sentenced Antistius to death for scurrilous verses against the emperor, he had moved as an amendment that Antistius should be banished. When divine honours were decreed to Poppaea, Thrasea had held aloof. He had never offered sacrifice to the gods for the preservation of 'the heavenly voice' of Caesar; finally, he had a grave face and looked like a schoolmaster. Hitherto the victims of Nero had almost all been tried in camarilla by himself, Tigellinus and Poppaea, and when possible his victims had been forced to lay violent

hands on themselves. 'Such deeds,' says Dean Merivale, 'were not exhibited in public, such records were not written in contemporary history. The sensibility of that excitable populace was little affected by mutterings of horrors removed actually from their sight, or softened to their imaginations by lapse of time. This was no doubt the secret of Nero's policy, which enabled him to break all his pledges to justice and humanity, and gave impunity to crimes which posterity has so deservedly execrated. But in the cases now before us, the threats of the accusers seemed to be of no avail, and the emperor was prevailed upon to consent, not without apprehension, to the course of a public prosecution.'

The charges against Soranus were: 'his friendship with Rubellius Plautus; his having sought popularity in the administration of his province of Asia when proconsul; and with encouraging disaffection in various communities.' With him was accused his young daughter, not yet twenty, married to Annius Pollio who had been banished for supposed implication in the conspiracy of Piso. She was charged with having sold her bridal necklace and rings to raise money for the performance of magical rites.

'On hearing the accusation,' says Tacitus, 'she fell prostrate on the floor, and remained for long bathed in tears, and speechless. Afterwards embracing the altar she said, "I prayed to no evil deities. I used no spells. I did not seek anything else by my unhappy prayers than that you, Caesar, and you, conscript fathers, would preserve my best of fathers unharmed. For this purpose I did, indeed, abandon my jewels, as I would have yielded life and blood, had they been required. Anyhow, my father knew nothing of what I did. If it were wrong, I alone am the delinquent." Soranus, whilst she was yet speaking, caught up her words, and cried earnestly that when he was in his province his daughter was not with him, and that she was a mere child when he was intimate with Plautus. Then he ran forward to embrace his daughter, and she flew to meet him, but the consular lictors interfered and prevented them.'

Moving though this scene must have been, it did not affect the fathers in the senate, each of whom was trembling for his own life. Thrasea, Soranus, and his daughter Servilia were only so far indulged as to be allowed to choose their mode of death.

Suetonius says that Nero allowed but an hour to those whom he obliged to kill themselves, and that to prevent delay he sent them physicians 'to *cure* them at once if they lingered beyond that time.'

He threw out hints that he had no intention of sparing those senators who survived, and that he would extirpate the entire order. Moreover, elated at the readiness with which his atrocious orders were executed, he declared that 'no prince before himself had known the extent of his power.'

Here, abruptly—with the death of Thrasea, that brave Roman *sans peur et sans reproche*—the history of Tacitus breaks off. Our manuscripts of this portion of his Annals have come to us from a single fragmentary copy, 'and the chance which has torn off some few leaves, perhaps, from the end of a volume, has broken the thread of a narrative, so painfully interesting, so solemnly instructive. The interest is common to all mankind who can sympathise in the sorrows and virtues of the noblest of their species; the instruction is for those who can gather from the agonising details the warnings or consolations they are fitted to impart.' (Merivale.)

IX.—THE EXPEDITION TO GREECE.

For a period now we have some relief from horrors.

> 'Paulum severae Musa tragoediae
> Desit theatris.'

An opportunity for great display took place, probably in the beginning of A.D. 66, which for a while turned the thoughts of Nero away from plots and secret enemies. This was the arrival in Rome of Tiridates, a claimant to the throne of Armenia to receive his crown and do homage for it. Arsaces XXIII., the Parthian, had invaded Armenia, taken Artaxata and Tigranocerta, the most important of its cities, about the time of Nero's accession to the throne, and had given the crown of Armenia to his brother Tiridates. This provoked a long war in which success varied, but Domitius Corbulo, the Roman general, reconquered Armenia and expelled Tiridates, but no sooner was his back turned than it was again overrun by the Parthians, and finally Nero agreed to surrender Armenia provided that Tiridates would do homage for his crown. To this he agreed in A.D. 63, and he did homage to an image of the emperor set up in the camp of Corbulo. This, however, did not satisfy Nero, who insisted that the Parthian prince should come to Rome and make his submission before the whole Roman people. To this also Tiridates agreed, and three years after, he arrived in the imperial capital with a great train.

A.U.C. 819. A.D. 66. Aet. 29.

The phase of Nero's derangement was at this time that for which the Germans have so expressive and untranslatable a term, *Grossenwahn*. The wildest projects revolved in his brain. He would seek out the sources of the Nile. He would make a campaign to Parthia itself and for ever crush these hereditary foes of the Roman power. He enrolled for this purpose a new legion of men six feet high, the 'Alexandrian Phalanx.' He would change the name of Rome to Neropolis, and extend its walls to enclose Ostia. He would connect the city

with the Avernian lake by a canal so wide that on it galleys might pass. He resolved on writing in verse the history of Rome, but debated as to the number of books of which it was to be composed, some number over four hundred, nothing under. Annaeus Cornutus was consulted on this project. 'Four hundred books are very many,' said he, 'too many for any one to read.' 'But Chrysippus wrote more,' said Nero readily. 'Yes,' answered Cornutus with incautious frankness, 'but they were of some good to the world,' an answer that ensured his banishment.

He forbade any one but himself to wear amethystine green or Tyrian purple, and having seen a lady at the theatre in the prohibited colours he had her dragged out of her seat, and her garments torn off her back, and he confiscated all her property. For himself, he fished with a net of purple and scarlet, richly set with gold. He thought it beneath his dignity to bet lower than 400,000 sesterces (£3000) on a cast of the die. Hearing that the Parthian prince was on his way, he ordered that he should be entertained lavishly and free of all charge on his route, at the cost of a million and a half of pounds in our reckoning. The sums expended on his guards, freedmen, actors, dancers, musicians, and buffoons amounted, according to Tacitus, to over sixteen millions of pounds. In all this we see the same craze as that which possessed the brain of his uncle. But there was a sombre grandeur, a barbaric magnificence, and a marked originality in the conceptions of Caius. There was nothing of the sort in those of Nero. He 'lusted after the incredible,' says Tacitus, 'but succeeded in only making himself ridiculous.' Caius had aimed at being a god, and Nero would outrival the deities of Olympus. He would drive better than the Sun, sing more divinely than Apollo, and wield a club with more dexterity than Hercules. He was above the duty of showing respect to the divinities of Rome. In a fit of alarm and timid superstition he did once seek the protection of the Syrian Astarte, but then renounced her protection and treated her image with bestial insult. At length the sole object of veneration to him was a sort of doll, from which he pretended to receive communications as to the future, and to which he cast some grains of incense every day, without knowing what the figure was intended to symbolise, or to what strange religion it belonged.

Nine months were spent by Tiridates on his way. He came with his wife and court, his sons and nephews. Before him marched three thousand Parthian guards, and behind a larger number of Roman veterans returning from the Eastern campaign. The queen wore a helmet that hid her features, and rode at the side of Tiridates, till they reached the confines of Italy, when, finding that Nero was at Baiae or Naples, with his train he took the Aemilian Way, through Picenum, and leaving Rome on his right hand went direct to Naples. There he was received. He bent on one knee and crossed his hands

over his breast before Nero, but, according to one account, stubbornly refused to resign his sword.

Great festivities were given under the management of Patrotus, a freedman. On one day only black people from Africa appeared on the stage. Then wild bulls were let loose in the arena, Tiridates called for a javelin, and with one blow wounded two of them. But the eastern prince turned away in disgust during an exhibition of gladiators fighting with their fists, when the victor stooped over his antagonist and killed him on the ground. 'That,' said Tiridates, 'is base play, to hit a man who is down.'

From Naples Nero made the Parthian accompany him to Rome, where a great spectacle was organised. The whole city was adorned with festoons and burning torches. Altars smoked and incense was wafted. In the forum a great daïs had been erected for the Emperor. The troops in burnished arms and with their standards flashing in the sun like lightning surrounded the place. No one was suffered to enter the forum who was not robed in white and crowned with laurel. The roofs of the houses were so crowded that, says Dio, not a tile could be seen.

At daybreak Nero approached in triumphal garb attended by the senate and the praetorians, ascended the daïs and seated himself on the ivory throne. Then entered a second procession, it was that of Tiridates in all the barbaric splendour of an oriental potentate. He and his attendants passed between the rows of soldiers till they reached the platform where sat Nero. The enthusiasm of the people broke out in thundering cheers, and for a moment Tiridates, unused to such explosions of feeling, was staggered, thinking that they demanded his death. But the heralds called to silence, and the prince recovered his composure. Bowing before the throne, he said, 'I, the grandson of Arsaces, brother of the kings Vologeses and Pacorus, appear before thee, my lord, as thy slave. I appear here to do thee honour as to my god, Mithras, and await the decision which thy divinity will come to as to my fate.'

Nero answered, 'Thou hast well done to come here, and suffer me to make thy acquaintance. What thy father left to thee and thy brothers have given thee, but which thou couldst not retain, that I freely give to thee, and name thee king of Armenia, to show to thee and to them that I give crowns to whom I will, and take them from whom I choose.'

After these words he signed that steps should be brought and placed before the tribune. By these the Parthian prince ascended, and as he knelt before Nero, the latter placed a crown on his head. This scene gave occasion to new bursts of applause from all quarters.

Then all adjourned to the theatre of Pompey, where Nero had had the proscenium and all parts visible to the eye plated over with gold

leaf. The awnings stretched above the pit to keep off the sun were of the forbidden Tyrian purple, embroidered in gold, with a representation of Nero driving the chariot of the sun, and all the rest of the awning was besprent with golden stars.

After the court had sat through a performance, a magnificent banquet was served, the prelude of what was to be the climax of the entertainment, for which Tiridates had been prepared by mysterious hints that he would see and hear something the like of which he might never hope to see and hear again.

What was the astonishment and disgust, however, of the proud Armenian king, when he beheld his host and liege lord strut upon the stage, twanging a lyre, and heard him shriek out a silly composition of his own in the tones of a peacock!

Hardly had he recovered from this exhibition, before Nero in a short green tunic appeared in the arena driving a chariot to which four horses were harnessed. When, heated and exultant, the fat sovereign waddled up to the royal box, and asked Tiridates what he thought of the spectacle, 'I have been thinking,' answered the Parthian dryly, 'what a remarkably good servant you have in Corbulo.'

The point of this answer was at the moment lost on Nero, but he turned it over in his head, and it cost Corbulo his life—the great general who had saved the honour of Rome in the East, and whose prowess had constrained Tiridates to do homage for his throne.

Tiridates returned to the East, and bore an invitation from Nero to Vologeses to visit him also. But Vologeses was not disposed to bend the knee to the coachman and comedian. The answer he sent was laconic. 'It is easier for you than for me to ship over the broad sea. When you are in the East it will be time enough for us to settle where we are to meet.' Nero actually purposed, as already mentioned, to go into Parthia. He had but to show himself, said he, and all opposition would disappear.

But now he was full of his deferred project of displaying his powers before the Greeks. 'Whoever,' says Dr. Wiedemeister, 'has had anything to do with those suffering from periodical mania, notices with growing surprise the remarkable uniformity in their accesses; each reproduces the same inclinations, passions, peculiarities, acts, and sayings of the patient. One access resembles another as one egg resembles another, with this difference only, that usually the extravagance grows in intensity. It was so with Nero. No sooner was the maniacal frenzy on him than he wanted again to rush on to the stage.'

The Neroniana had been instituted in A.D. 60, and in 65 they were repeated. The Senate would rather have above them as prince a cruel despot than a dancing mime, and it attempted to forestall his appearance in the games as a competitor, by voting to him the wreaths for music, poetry, and elocution. But Nero refused to be balked of his

purpose. He declined the prizes, and announced that he intended to contest them with rivals, and that he would receive them only when he had legitimately won them.

Then the Neroniana began. His name had been enrolled among the candidates as lyrist and singer, and like the rest he drew his lot from the urn to decide the order in which he was to perform. When his turn came he appeared on the stage attended by Faenus and Tigellinus, the two commanders of the praetorian guard, who held his lyre, and followed by the tribunes of the guard and his most intimate friends. When he took his place and had finished the prelude, he announced to the audience, through the consular, Cluvius Rufus, that he would sing 'the Niobe,' and he sang away till four o'clock in the afternoon, when the wreath was decreed to him by acclamation, and he adjourned the rest of the contest till the following year. As, however, he was impatient for the resumption of the games, he relieved himself by giving special performances to the Roman people in the interim. Then the audience were not spared. The energy and endurance of the emperor seemed boundless. He wearied out those who heard him long before he flagged himself. He looked about jealously to see who absented themselves and who showed signs of indifference or disgust. To be absent was a slight, not to applaud showed lack of loyalty, and such as failed to be present and to applaud were punished with banishment and confiscation of goods. No one might stay away, and no one being in the theatre might leave it. Women were confined during the interminable performances; men seated on the same benches day after day, and hour after hour, were chilled or prostrated with fever. Some, unable to endure the lengthy exhibitions pretended to die, and were carried out as corpses by their slaves. Among the spectators were soldiers planted at short intervals to keep order. The Augustals were in their places. Provincials and country-folk who did not understand that they were expected to simulate enthusiasm were poked in the ribs, or struck across the shoulders by the swords of the praetorians to stir them into rapturous applause. If they clapped their hands too soon or too late they were pointedly reminded to follow the claque. Some applauded till their hands refused to be longer thus employed.

At last the prince started on his journey to Greece. Lucian says that what drove him there was his passion for music, and the belief firmly rooted in his brain that even the muses could not sing like him. And he was resolved to win the crown at the Olympian contest. Some writers have supposed that he was actuated by a glimmer of political sagacity, that he was uneasy at the successes and power of Corbulo, and that he went towards the East with the avowed intention of visiting Asia and Egypt to confirm his power there and to disturb any plans of revolt that might be forming. But

that he had a political plan in his head is most improbable. He never showed himself either capable of appreciating real danger, or of taking a determined step to meet it when it appeared. His mind was at this period in a paroxysm of mania in which he believed himself to be something divine before whose light all opposition would disappear.

When it was announced that he was actually about to visit Greece, all the States hastened to proclaim that the contests which were recurrent in successive years at Olympia, Nemea, Delphi, and Corinth should be crowded into the space of time during which the emperor resided on Greek soil, so that he might achieve the distinction of being a Periodonicus, or victor in the whole circle.

He started, attended by courtiers and court followers of all descriptions, and with the cunning of a madman he invited as a favour to attend his triumphal progress all such members of the nobility and senate whom he had marked for death, that he might destroy them at his leisure and with more security at a distance from the city.

He left behind him in Rome a freedman, Helios, without definite instructions, but empowered to act as regent. That was a wonderful expedition. Dio says: 'He started for Greece not as had his predecessors, Flaminius, Mummius, Agrippa, and Augustus; but as a chariot-driver, a lyre-twanger, a herald, a dramatic performer in tragedies. His army that he led consisted not of the Augustians only but of so many that, as far as numbers went, he might have been marching against the Parthians. But these heroes under Nero's banner, in place of the weapons of war, brandished fiddles and fiddle-sticks, masks and buskins. And the victories won were worthy of the host; those subdued were not a Philip, a Perseus, an Antiochus, but a Terpnus, a Diodorus, and a Parmenes, a dancing-master, a fiddler, and a mime. Parmenes had enjoyed some fame in the time of Caius; now the old fellow was dragged on to the stage to give Nero the opportunity of triumphing over him, and as victor of upsetting his statues.

'If this had been all, he would have been laughed at for his pains. But it was intolerably humiliating for Romans to hear of, let alone see, the reigning emperor enter the lists against other candidates, practise his voice, go through rehearsals, march on to the stage with shaven chin and curly locks, and naked, with mantle cast back, attended by one or two companions only; and to see him glower at his rivals, attack them with contumely, bribe the judges and officers keeping order not to turn him out and to show him some favour—and all this to win the prize for lyre-playing when he was pitching away his credit as emperor. Could a disgrace be greater? Sulla degraded others; Nero degraded himself. Could a victory be more contemptible than one which was crowned with a few olive twigs, laurels, ivy, or fir—when he sacrificed for such the civic crown? How miserable must have been his appearance when he strutted forward on high buskins, and sank his imperial

dignity in the dust! Or when he put on his mask and cast off his sovereignty! What more contemptible than the parts which he picked out for himself; when he was led about as a blind man, simulated a madman, acted the part of a woman in travail, or of a vagabond. He spoke, moved, endured all, like a common strolling player, with one exception, that he wore, when taking the role of a captive, golden fetters, for he said it did not become a Roman prince to wear such as were of iron.'

'One day in the Olympian games whilst chariot-racing he was pitched out and almost run over, nevertheless he was crowned as victor, in thanks for which he made a present to the judges of two hundred and fifty thousand denarii. To the Pythian prophetess he gave a hundred thousand, because she pronounced an oracle that gratified him. But with Apollo he was so irate because his oracle was unfavourable, that he killed a number of men and flung their carcases into the cleft out of which the sacred vapour rose. In all those places where there were contests he strove for the prize, employing the consular, Cluvius Rufus, as his herald, who trumpeted forth the announcement, "The Caesar Nero has conquered in this contest also, and crowns the Roman people and the Universe!"'

He excepted Sparta and Athens from his visits. The laws of Lycurgus were not to his taste, and therefore he did not go to Lacedaemon; and he was afraid lest the wrath of the avenging Athene should light on him for his murder of his mother, if he entered the city sacred to her. Moreover, he shrank from initiation into the Eleusinian mysteries, from a sense of his unworthiness, or rather from fear of the consequences.

The first Greek island on which Nero had landed was Corcyra, and there he initiated his tour of performances by a song sung before the altar of Jupiter Cassius.

At Olympia there was no theatre, only a hippodrome; Nero had it adapted for his dramatic performances as well as for horse-racing. Before he entered on a contest he showed the greatest deference to the judges, and assured them 'he had done all in his power to prepare for the ordeal. The result was in the hands of fate. He requested them, as men of taste and culture, to overlook all accidents and consider the general perfection of the performance.' But though they encouraged him, he was afflicted with nervousness or suspicion, and thought that any reserve in the umpires was a token of disaffection. In every particular he obeyed the rules laid on dramatic performers, not to spit, nor blow his nose, and to use his sleeve only for wiping the sweat from his brow, nor to seat himself, however weary he might be. As on one occasion in the course of tragic declamation he dropped his staff, he trembled with nervousness lest through this accident he should forfeit the prize; and he could only be pacified when the mime who accompanied him

on the cithara swore to him that no one had observed it, so engrossed were all in admiration of his voice.

But he was not content with even the loud voice of Cluvius, as his herald. He competed with others as to who could bellow loudest, and having gained the victory in this also, he took to announcing his own victories himself.

It was noticed that he particularly affected acting female parts, which gave occasion to many jokes; but it would seem, as has been suggested by Dr. Wiedemeister, that this as well as other eccentricities of a like nature noted at this period, were due to a phase not uncommon among madmen, that of actually believing themselves to have changed their sex.

On reaching Corinth, nothing would content him but that he must cut through the isthmus. The idea of uniting the Ionian and Adriatic seas had been mooted before, and had been entertained by Demetrius, by Caesar, and by Caius. Nero undertook the task, not from any consideration of utility, but to show that he could do what others had failed to accomplish. 'He thought,' says Lucian, 'on that old Achaean king who, on his expedition against Troy, passed through the canal he had dug between Chalcis and Aulis, and had cut Boeotia from Euboea; on Darius, who had cast a bridge over the Thracian Bosphorus, in his expedition against the Scythians; and even more on the undertaking of Xerxes, in its magnitude never equalled. Beside all this he conceived that he would be giving no grander boon to all Greece than by removing the small impediment which interfered with the traffic between Greece and Italy. For, however intoxicated and disorderly the capricious power of tyrants may make them, there are moments when it does occur to them to do something great by which they may become famous.'

The day on which the first sod was turned was appointed to be a great festival. The emperor left Corinth, where he was then residing, at the head of a great train. On the morning he issued in gorgeous apparel from his tent. First he snatched up the lyre and sang a hymn in honour of Amphitrite and Neptune, and threw in as well an ode on Leucothea and Melicertes. Then the praefect of Greece handed him a golden spade. Amidst shouts and the strains of music he turned three clods, collected the earth in a basket, put it on his shoulder, and after having made a magniloquent address to the labourers, returned in triumph to Corinth, as pleased with himself as if he had performed the twelve labours of Hercules. The work was begun energetically; innumerable labourers had been collected on the spot. Vespasian had sent him six thousand sturdy young Jews for the purpose; and the gaols of the empire had been emptied to furnish him with a sufficiency of workmen. However, after five days of work, Nero's interest cooled, was turned in another direction—and the undertaking was abandoned.

Those about his person hastened to find excuses—bad omens were easily manufactured—to cover the retreat of the emperor from a task begun with such a flourish and so speedily given up.

A year and a half were spent by Nero in Greece. The expenditure was enormous, and to supply his private treasury he had recourse to plundering temples of their stores of precious metal, and what was worse, to the execution of wealthy men, that he might possess himself of their fortunes. His progress through Greece, says Dio, was like that of a conqueror over a subjugated land. 'He plundered it to exhaustion, and had men, women, and children murdered. At first he required the children and freedmen of those whom he sentenced to death to give him half what his victims had left; and those condemned were allowed to make wills so as to let it appear that they were not put to death for the sake of their fortunes. But presently he took to himself either all or the major part, and finally he swept the whole into his pocket, and by a decree banished all the children of his victims from the country. But even that did not content him, and he had many of them assassinated in their exile. It would not be possible to form an estimate of the sums he took from those whom he allowed to live, and drew from the Roman temples. Messengers were flying in all directions with no other commissions than sentences of death. Indeed no letters passed among people then, the post being entirely occupied by the imperial correspondence.' A.U.C. 820. A.D. 67. Aet. 30.

And to make the situation the more grimly ludicrous, in emulation of Flaminius Nero had proclaimed the freedom of Greece.

Nero had, as Tiridates had informed him, an excellent servant in Corbulo, a brilliant officer, popular with his soldiers, and of repute throughout the East. Had Corbulo willed it, he might have raised the standard of revolt, but he had never swerved from his fidelity to Nero. He was now repaid by Nero recalling him to Greece and ordering him to commit suicide. Without murmur or resistance he plunged a sword into his heart, exclaiming as he struck the blow, 'Rightly served!'

Of this brave and honourable man several portrait busts exist; that in the Capitoline Museum closely resembles a bust found in 1792 at Gabii, in a temple erected by the empress Domitia Longina to the memory of her father, this same Corbulo. This bust is now in the Louvre. Another bust is at Florence,[1] another in the Hermitage at S. Petersburg, and another at Berlin, this latter, however, badly restored. Another in the Town Museum, Périgueux. That in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, is only possibly a Corbulo. The genuine busts represent him as an old man without beard, with hair still thick on his head, worn, in the Louvre bust, drawn over his brow

[1] Where it passes as Cicero.

like that of Brutus. The face is oval, pointed at the chin. The cheek bones are high, the eyes contracted and small; two deep furrows descend from the nostrils to the angles of the mouth, but do not encircle the mouth, and meet under the chin, as in the busts of Claudius. The lips protrude and the chin is marked and blunt. There is the decision of a general in the mouth; a look of dissatisfaction in the face, but not one of unkindness. The brow is lacking in breadth. In age he appears to be about seventy; and this leads us to believe that Corbulo the general is identical with the praetor in A.D. 21, and the consul in A.D. 41, an identification which has been doubted by some.[1]

Fifteen years after his death his beautiful daughter, Domitia Longina, whose portrait is one of the most pathetic that has come down to us, was elevated to be the unhappy wife of the tyrant Domitius.

Two other provincial governors shared the fate of Corbulo. These were the brothers Rufus and Proculus, of the great Scribonian house; they had commanded in Upper and Lower Germany, and had done nothing to incur the suspicion of the emperor save that they were beloved by the military. They were recalled and compelled to commit suicide.

Nero did not forget, whilst in Greece, the reconstruction of Rome and its adornment. Vast collections of statuary, the spoil of Greece, had perished or been injured by the flames in the great conflagration. He utilised his expedition to the nursery of the plastic art to pillage it of what had been left by former depredators. The temples, the forums, even private mansions were ransacked to supply the vacant pedestals of Rome. What Nero could not carry away he put up to auction to the highest bidder, or suffered the unhappy owners to redeem at exorbitant prices.

In the meantime in Rome the hand of tyranny had not been relaxed. The emperor had consigned the government of Italy to Helios, his freedman, and had left him to supply himself with the means whereby to maintain the government by the usual process of confiscations. The nobility were decimated and impoverished. Many of the ancient families, illustrious in the annals of the past, had become extinct, and of those which had taken their places, the sword and the poisonous draught were rapidly thinning the numbers. The places of the great Romans were taken by manumitted slaves, both as governors of provinces, and as millionaires at home. Yet, however much the Romans might acknowledge their desperate position, they knew not in which direction to look for redress. The praetorians were in the pay of the emperor, and so long as they were content, the senate and people were powerless. Among the governors of provinces they did

[1] On account of a passage in Tacitus, *Ann.* iii. 31; see Furneaux's *Tacitus*, on this passage, note 5. But his age may have been only relative to that of Sulla; he was praetor 30.

not know which to choose, and which would be ready to rise. Nero was the last of the blood of Augustus, and they hoped when he had danced and stormed out his span of life, in default of another representative of the Augustan house, the republic might be re-established.

X.—THE END OF NERO.

In Rome, Helios was neither unobservant of the mood of the citizens and soldiers, nor neglectful of giving notice to his master. He might perhaps have passed over the discontent of the nobles as chronic, and that of the rabble as fleeting, but he saw that dissatisfaction was spreading among the soldiery. The generals and procurators in the provinces had felt at ease whilst Nero danced and sang, and had not entertained alarm on their own account when he put to death many of the foremost members of the aristocracy. But when he cut off his ablest and trustiest military commanders, each became fearful for his own safety, and each sounded the soldiers under him to ascertain whether they could be relied on in an emergency. The praetorians in Rome, moreover, were disaffected. They felt the indignity of serving under a prince who made himself ridiculous in the eyes of barbarians. With cruelty and oppression they were familiar, deeds of blood sent no shudder through their consciences, nor revolted their sense of justice, but such a breach of decorum, such flagrant defiance of the social traditions as had been manifested by Nero, filled them with indignation and impatience. Helios despatched to his master a warning of the symptoms of danger he observed both at home and in the provinces, and urged his speedy return to the seat of government. A.U.C. 821. A.D. 68. Aet. 30½.

But the fit of exaltation was still on Nero, he could not realise that he was in danger; he wrote back: 'You admonish me to present myself again at Rome; nay, but you should rather dissuade me from returning until I have reaped my full harvest of rewards.'

At length, finding Nero regardless of his appeals by letter, Helios crossed over into Greece, and with much difficulty induced him to set his face towards Rome. The weather was stormy. It was probably the end of February when Nero started, and fervent prayers were put up that the waves might engulf him.

Before leaving Greece he inquired of the Delphic oracle, and was assured that he was menaced with danger, and must be on his guard against 'the seventy-third year,' a response that did not greatly alarm a youth of thirty.

He returned with 1,808 chaplets, which he had won, not as a conquering hero in war against the kings of the East, but as a victor in the games against Greek freedmen.

How was it, it may be asked, that he had never descended into the arena and fought with gladiators? It was indeed his intention, having out-rivalled Apollo, to surpass also Hercules, and a lion was drugged or gorged to suffer itself to have its brains knocked out by the club of Nero. But he never adventured himself against his fellow-men armed with sword, and trident, and net. Therein he showed a prudence hardly to be looked for in a madman.

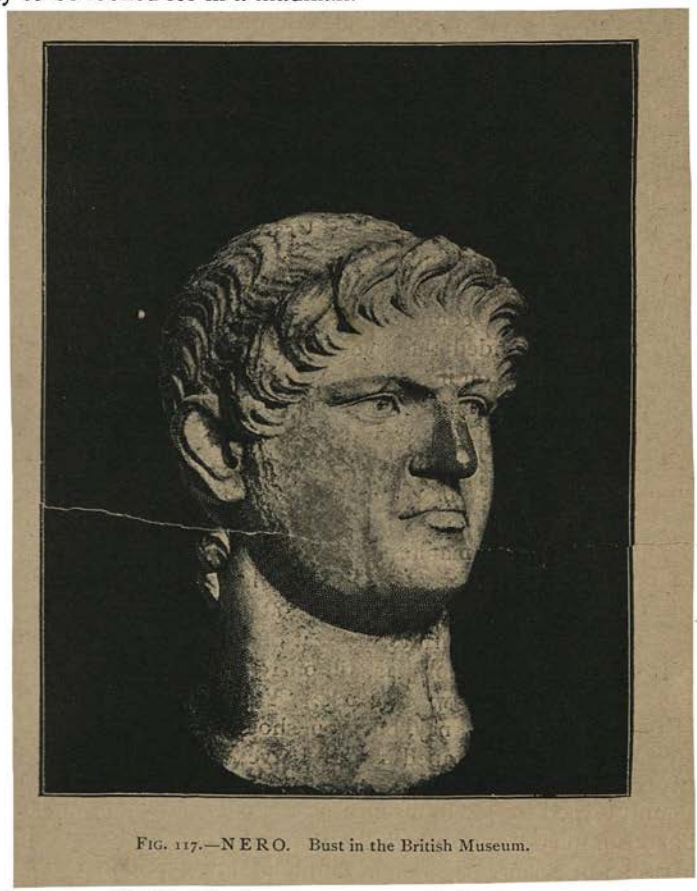


FIG. 117.—NERO. Bust in the British Museum.

He conveyed with him in ships many artistic treasures of Greece; but some of the vessels were wrecked. 'It matters not,' said Nero confidently, 'the fishes will bring them to me when I reach Puteoli.'

After the loss and recovery of both Britain and Armenia, his confidence in his good fortune had become unbounded. He went direct to Naples, on reaching Italy, and entered it in procession. The city wall was broken through that the Periodonicus might enter in his triumphal car drawn by white horses. He was there on the 19th of

March, the anniversary of the murder of his mother, when a despatch was put into his hand announcing the revolt of C. Julius Vindex, governor of Gaul, who took up arms, not for himself, but in favour of Sulpicius Galba, governor of Spain. He paid no attention to the letter, but went off at once to the amphitheatre to see a fight of gladiators. At supper further tidings of an alarming nature arrived, but these also he totally disregarded, and remained eight days lingering in Campania, without deigning even to speak of the insurrection that had been announced to him, more than that he threw out the threat on one occasion of treating the traitors with severity.

Nothing roused him even to acknowledge and answer the letters he received, till the proclamation of Vindex was put into his hands, in which Nero was spoken of as 'a wretched fiddler.' That touched him in the only susceptible place, and he wrote off with his own hand a letter to the senate, requiring it to exact satisfaction for this insult. Passing over all other accusations, he laid hold of the charge that he was a bad musician, and disputed it with vehemence; he asked those about him whether they knew any one who was a more accomplished musician than himself. He apologised for not immediately returning to Rome, because he was somewhat hoarse—as though the only purpose of his seeking the capital again was that he might indulge it once more with a sample of his singing powers.

After a while Nero started leisurely on his return to Rome. Eighteen hundred and eight heralds preceded him, bearing in their hands the crowns he had won, each followed by another, who held aloft a placard on which were inscribed the place and date of the victory, and the names of the opponents defeated by Nero; and beneath each was written: 'Nero is the first Roman who has, from time immemorial, won this prize.' Then he followed in his triumphal chariot. In like manner as he had made his *debut* in Naples, so did he enter his native town of Antium; so also Albanum. But most splendid of all was his entry into Rome. He was in the highest spirits; for he had passed a monument on which was represented a Gaulish soldier defeated and dragged by the hair by a Roman knight. He accepted this as a favourable omen, and leaped for joy in his chariot.

The triumphal car in which he entered Rome was that in which Augustus had ridden. He wore a purple robe, embroidered with gold; a chaplet of olive on his head, and he carried the Pythian wreath of laurels in his hand. Beside him stood the harper Diodorus. The houses were decorated with festoons; the streets had been strewn with saffron; singing-birds, comfits, flowers, were thrown by the people as he passed. The city was full of fragrance all the day, and was brilliantly illuminated at night.

The prince was saluted by thousands of voices shouting, 'To the Olympian the Pythian conqueror! To Augustus, Augustus! Hail,

Nero, the true Hercules! Hail, Nero, the true Apollo! Hail, Nero, the only Periodonicus! The only one that ever was! Hail to thy divine voice! Blessed is he who heareth thee!'

Behind him marched the Augustians, and the guard returning with him from Greece, crowned also with chaplets, as though sharers in his victory. The procession passed through the Circus Maximus, some arches of which were demolished to admit it, and thence by the Velabrum and the Tuscan Street into the forum; then, by the Via Sacra, reversing the order taken in military triumphs, he ascended by the *clivus* to the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine Hill. On reaching his palace, he had the sacred crowns suspended about his bed-chamber, and caused statues of himself to be erected in the attire of a harper, and medals to be struck representing himself in the same costume.

To this period belong, we may presume, the statues of Nero idealised as Apollo. Such a bust, larger than life, much repaired, belonging originally to a statue, is in the Vatican, in the Hall of Busts, No. 278.

If the senate or his ministers expected that he would now attend to business, and take measures against the Gallic insurrection, they were speedily undeceived; for his first announcement was that the Circensian games should begin, when, of course, all matters of state must stand aside.

To spare his voice for the coming exhibition, he communicated all his commands to the soldiers through an intermediary; his singing-master never left his side, to caution him against overstraining his vocal organ, and to avoid draughts, and keep a muffler over his mouth.

The Circensian games began, and the eighteen hundred and eight chaplets were brought out again and hung on the Egyptian obelisks in the circus. The emperor in his green dress raced as usual, but allowed himself occasionally to be beaten, so as to give a semblance of reality to his other victories. There seemed to be no end to the races. The energy and enthusiasm of Nero were inexhaustible. At length his attention was diverted into another channel by a certain Lydian, who humbly entreated the emperor to allow him the honour of hearing him sing and twang the lyre. If this grace were accorded him, he professed himself ready to present to the emperor the sum of—in our money—£7000. Nero rose to the bait at once. The thoughts of horse-racing made way for those of singing and strutting the boards. He sang Oedipus in exile, but when he came to the verse—

'Wife, mother, father, goad me on to death,'

suddenly he turned giddy and fell.

In the audience the malicious whisper passed from bench to bench: 'His singing has roused the *cocks* (gallos),' *i.e.* the Gauls.

All at once, in the middle of the night, messengers flew about the city to summon the senators to the palace. Thinking that tidings of

moment had come from Gaul relative to the insurrection of Vindex, they hastened to the Palatine. There they found Nero in great excitement. 'I have found out at last,' said he, 'the expedient by which a water-organ can be made to produce a louder tone.' Then he explained to them the contrivance, showed them the mechanism, and promised to give an exhibition of it, 'that is,' he said, with a laugh, 'if Vindex will suffer me.'

When news arrived of the failure of the attempt of Vindex, and of the death of the rebel, he vowed he would have games surpassing those already given. He would appear naked before the people, and strangle a lion in his arms; he would show off his powers on the water-organ, on the flute, and on the bagpipes; and on the last day he would dance in the ballet of 'Turnus.'

Though Vindex had fallen, the insurrection gained ground. Nero assumed the consulship alone, and then gave an entertainment in the palace, at which he appeared walking round the hall, leaning on the arms of his friends, and assured all present that he intended to visit Gaul, advance to meet the mutineers, and weep so piteously that their hearts would melt. Then, when they were brought to repentance, he would institute public rejoicings, and, 'by the way,' said he, 'I must set to work at once to compose my songs for the occasion.'

He prepared for this Gallic expedition in his own fashion. He ordered a number of conveyances to be got ready and laden with his various theatrical properties, masks, buskins, herald's staves set with pearls, his musical instruments, etc. Then he ordered all the ladies of his harem to have their hair cut short, and he armed them with toy axes and shields, and said that so he would have a company of Amazons. Then he sent to the city-tribes to enlist; but as no qualified persons answered the summons, he ordered all masters to furnish him with a certain number of their slaves—the best they had—including their stewards and secretaries. Next he commanded every order of the people to be heavily taxed; all tenants of houses to pay into the exchequer forthwith one year's rent; but again he met with sullen opposition.

At this time a vessel arrived from Alexandria, and as the corn supplies were running short, it was hoped that the ship had brought grain. When, however, it was discovered that it was laden with sand for the arena, the people were roused to fury, howled under his windows, and treated Nero with contumely when he appeared in public. On one of his statues was placed a small chariot with an inscription, 'I have a race to run. I am off.' On another was hung a leather sack and a ticket: 'What shall I do?' under which was the reply, 'The sack of the parricide is thy desert.'

Tacitus is not clear as to what was now done. Apparently Nero summoned troops from Illyricum for the defence of Italy, but found

that they were already in correspondence with the soldiers he had hastily got together and had placed under the command of Rubrius Gallus, who, it soon appeared, was preparing to make terms with Galba.

News arrived next that Galba and the Spanish legions were marching towards Italy. Thereupon the prince fell down in an epileptic fit, and lay for a long time speechless. He passed at once from his confident mood into one of melancholy and despair. He dreamt that Octavia appeared and dragged him down—down into a fathomless abyss. Then he fancied that he was covered with legions of flying ants; then that all the statues in Pompey's theatre came out of their niches and descended from their pedestals, and surrounded him. He fancied that his favourite Spanish jennet was transformed, so that its hinder parts were like those of an ape, and that it ran up to him neighing melodiously, like the musical Alexandrian applause that had so taken his fancy. He fancied, or was told, that in the night the doors of the mausoleum of Augustus had flown open, and that a loud voice had pealed from it, calling him by name.

Trembling, he hastened to consult the omens, when the boy, Sporus, who attended him, handed him a ring, and on the gem he saw engraved Proserpine being borne off to the Nether World.

He ran into the senate-house beating his head and tearing his clothes, crying out, 'It is all over with me!' Then he threw himself on the compassion of his old nurse, saying, 'I am beyond all example wretched, for I have lost an empire whilst still alive.' He was taken to the theatre to divert his gloom. There seeing an actor applauded, he sent him word, 'Now you have it all your own way, because I cannot act on the stage any more.' Frantic ideas of revenge flashed through his disordered brain. He would have all Romans in banishment everywhere massacred. He would order the butchery of all Gauls in Rome. He would invite the senate to a feast and serve them with poison. He would fire the city again, and turn loose on the people all the wild beasts. What he might have done, had he still been surrounded by servants amenable to his orders, cannot be said; but already soldiers, slaves, senate, were deserting him.

As he was sitting in downcast mood and silent at dinner, tidings arrived that all the legions in the provinces had declared against him. In a paroxysm of fury and terror he kicked over the table, tore the letters to pieces, and smashed two valuable cups he had because of certain Homeric lines upon them that were ominous.

He had relied on the Delphic oracle that assured him he had to fear only the seventy-third year, and now he learned that Galba, proclaimed emperor by the troops, was in his seventy-third year. Gathering together a little resolution, or prompted by Tigellinus, whose fate was bound up with his own, he sent further appeals to Illyricum for soldiers, but with no result. What troops he could

muster he despatched under Rubrius Gallus to meet the advancing Galba, but, when they showed that no reliance was to be placed on them, he was for going on board the vessel that had discharged its freight of fine sand, and flying to Alexandria. 'If I do lose my sovereignty,' said he, 'I can yet earn my livelihood by my art.' He ordered his guard to attend him to Ostia, and fly with him. They refused. They would go with a dauntless leader to death, but not run with a coward. 'Is it then so very hard a matter to die?' said one sneeringly. He sought the hag Locusta, renowned for her poisons, and made her give him a deadly powder which he enclosed in a golden casket. Then he crossed over the Tiber to the Servilian gardens, and sent a freedman to secure a galley at Ostia.

The night was that of the 8th of June, hot and still. The emperor could not find Tigellinus; he had fled. What had become of Helios we do not hear. Nymphidius, left in command of the praetorians, withdrew to the camp, and entered into communication with the senate.

The emperor retired to his bed, but could not sleep. The door of his chamber flew open of its own accord. About midnight he rose, and, leaving his room, wandered about the corridor in deadly anxiety, looking for a servant or friend. All was hushed. No tramp of the sentinel was to be heard. The palace was deserted. Guards, freedmen, courtiers of every kind, servants and attendants, mimes and mountebanks of both sexes had fled or withdrawn. He knocked at every door, but received no answer. Returning to his bedroom he found that the brief moments of his absence had been utilised: some slave had crept in, stolen his jewels, and carried off the poison for the sake of the gold box that contained it.

Again he wandered about calling for help; and now at last the boy Sporus appeared, and then the freedman Phaon and a couple of slaves. 'Fetch me Spiculus,' ordered the wretched prince. Spiculus was a gladiator. He sent for him that he might die by his hand. But that fellow also was gone. 'I have neither friend nor foe left!' wailed Nero. Then he ran out, declaring he would throw himself into the Tiber. But the dark water gurgling by repelled him, and he returned to the palace asking for some hiding-place. Phaon named his villa situated between the Via Nomentana and the Via Salaria in the direction of the Anio.

A hope dawned in the heart of Nero. He disguised himself in an old dress, the worst horse in his stable was brought to him, and he mounted, with a hood drawn over his head, the inseparable kerchief with which he muffled his throat held up to his face, partly to disguise it, and partly still no doubt with some thought how bad for the voice the night air might prove. In his slippers he rode forth, attended by Phaon, Sporus, and Epaphroditus, his cabinet secretary. The summer

lightning was flashing over the Alban hills. An earthquake shook the city, and to the frightened emperor's imagination, the ghosts of all those whom he had murdered rose from the reeling earth, lined his path and pointed at him.

The way lay close to the praetorian camp. On the old horse Nero mounted the steep, basalt-paved Alta Semita that led up the Quirinal hill, and as he ascended the hill the clouds rolled dense over the sky. On nearing the Nomentane gate, he could hear that the praetorians in the camp hard by were awake and in agitation. A lightning flash flared out of the sky and struck the road before the flying emperor. Passengers were in the street. 'See there!' shouted one, 'these fellows are in pursuit of Nero.' Another coming out of the country arrested the fugitives to know the news. Suddenly the horse Nero rode started and plunged at a corpse that lay in the way, and the kerchief fell from before the emperor's face. A passing praetorian recognised the Caesar and hastened off to the camp to report what he had seen.

There was need for haste. He left the Via Nomentana with his attendants and took a side lane, dismounted, let the horse go, and hurried across country among bushes and thorns, and got into a footpath that traversed a rush-grown marsh. Along this the attendants of Nero got him with difficulty, and only by spreading their cloaks on the soft, oozy soil.

So they reached the wall of the back part of the villa. Here he remained till morning dawned, not daring to speak to his companions, or they to him. 'When a dog barked,' says Dio, 'or a bird twittered, when a twig stirred, he shivered with fear. He sighed and sobbed to himself, murmuring incessantly the line of the poet:—

'Father and wife bid me, most wretched, die!'

As the air turned cold towards morning, Phaon urged him to creep into one of the sand-pits near, but he shuddered and refused, 'No,' said he, 'I will not go underground whilst alive.' With hollowed hand he scooped some stagnant water out of the marsh to quench his fever-thirst; 'And this,' said he, 'is Nero's distilled water.' As his cloak was torn by the brambles, he pulled out the thorns that stuck in it. Meanwhile, Phaon had been into his villa and had knocked a hole through the wall at the back. Through this, on all-fours, crawled Nero, and was then hidden in the nearest closet, where he threw himself on a miserable pallet, with an old coverlet cast over it, and, being hungry and thirsty, though he refused some coarse country bread that was brought him, he drank a little tepid water. His faithful attendants now pointed out to him that life was not possible, and it would be the better way for him manfully to accept the fact and put an end to himself.

'Well then, dig my grave,' said he, 'but line it with marble, and go fetch water and wood, that my body may be washed and burnt.

O Zeus! what an artist is lost in me!' In rushed a messenger of Phaon's with a letter. Nero snatched it from his hand, tore it open, and read that the senate had met, had declared him an enemy of the state, and had given orders that any one who found him was to deal with him after the ancestral manner.

'And what is that?' asked the emperor, who either in his present condition had forgotten, or having cared so little about the laws had never learned what the punishment was. It was explained to him that the traitor's head was put into a forked stick, and he was stripped and whipped to death. When Nero heard this he trembled, and catching up a pair of daggers tested their points and laid them aside again, saying, 'The fated hour was not yet come.'

Then he invited Sporus to raise the funeral wail for him. Next moment he entreated one of those present to kill himself with a dagger so as to encourage him to follow the example. This each declined to do, and gently reprimanded him for his want of courage. 'Ah!' said he, 'yes, I yet live, to my shame be it spoken. This is not becoming in Nero. Indeed it is not becoming, Nero! man, pluck up thy heart, be cool, man, be cool!' mixing Greek with Latin.

As the miserable coward was thus whining, he heard the clatter of horse-hoofs along the road. True to his character, he at once fell to quoting poetry, and recited the line of Homer:—

'The sound of swift-heel'd steeds assails my ears!'

With shaking hand he applied a dagger to his throat, but had not resolution to drive it in; he was therefore assisted by his secretary, Epaphroditus.

In another moment a centurion burst in, and found the wretched prince seated on the squalid bed, and he hastened to sop the blood with his cloak so as, if possible, to prevent Nero's purpose from being fulfilled.

'Too late!' said Nero, 'and this is your loyalty?'

Then he sank back on the bed and died, 'his eyes fixed and starting out of his head, to the terror of all who beheld him.'

He died on June 9th, A.D. 68, on the identical day on which he had caused his wife Octavia to be assassinated.

When he died he was aged thirty years, five months, and twenty-six days, and was in the fourteenth year of his reign.

Thus perished the last of the family of the Caesars, the last of the divine Julian race. By edict of the senate his name was pronounced accursed, his decrees were effaced, his statues overthrown. With caps of freedom on their heads, the people ran about Rome, cheering, falling into each other's arms and weeping for joy that the tyranny was overpassed.

But loving hands cared for the fallen prince. His nurses, Ecloge

and Alexandria, though he had put to death wantonly the son of one of them, and Acte, his first love, whom he had deserted for Poppaea, laid his ashes in the tomb of the Domitii, that stood at the foot of what is now called the Pincian Hill.

It would be a mistake to suppose that Nero perished unregretted. Among the people, to the last, he was popular; he gave them what they liked—shows. What cared they for the dignity of Rome? for the decimation of the nobility? Only for a moment did his popularity suffer eclipse—just before his fall, and when fallen he was bitterly regretted by the rabble. They strewed flowers about his monument, they buoyed themselves up with idle hopes that he was still alive, was in hiding, and would return to his delighted people.

Even those who had suffered from his barbarity could not realise that he was actually removed, and in the Apocalypse it is thought he is obscurely alluded to as the dreaded one, with the number of the beast, 666 (Neron Kaisar in Hebrew letters) who was to reappear, when the seven seals of the seven first Roman emperors, from Caesar to Galba, had been removed.

He was the last of the Julian-Claudian dynasty.

The last drops of the united blood of Octavius, of Agrippa, and of Livia were sopped up by the old ragged coverlet in Phaon's villa. Intermarriage had led to the natural consequences. The germs of disease that might have been dissipated by the admixture of fresh and vigorous blood were accumulated in the Caesarean stock by consanguineous marriages, till all the members to the last perished, either as madmen, or as victims to the mad fears of their blood relatives and natural protectors.

What three men of genius or ability had built up by their labour and self-control, three men in their madness or incapacity had cast down. On what lines the dictator Caesar would have planned and based the new constitution, that culminated in imperialism, we can only conjecture. His was a creative genius, and he had a far-seeing eye. But he was not suffered to do much more than clear the ground and lay the first stones. The daggers of Brutus and Cassius though aimed at the heart of Caesar were of fatal import to Rome herself. That work which Caesar alone among men was capable of effecting by his wondrous constructive abilities was left to be accomplished at haphazard under Augustus. This latter was endowed with cleverness, not with genius, and he suffered the constitution of the new imperialism, forced on by the exigencies of the situation, to shape itself. He followed, no doubt, after a fashion, the scheme of Julius Caesar, as far as he was acquainted with it, but there is little evidence that he put his hand vigorously to work to reconstruct the Roman State on a clearly defined plan. As it emerged into shape it was rather the product of a series of compromises.

Tiberius endeavoured honestly to carry out this compact of compromise made by Augustus with the senate and the people.

The fatality which cut away the props of the dynasty one after another left Tiberius finally alone, and what seems to have been an integral element of the scheme failed. Augustus had secured the succession of the son of Livia by associating him with himself in the government, so that there might be no break in the continuity, no excuse for a *pronunciamento* of the army, or for the formation in the senate of factions advocating rival candidates, who would plunge the commonwealth in civil war. But when Tiberius lost Germanicus, then his own son Drusus, next the elder sons of Agrippina, he was left unsupported. There was no one but the truculent Caius who could succeed, and him Tiberius would not associate with himself in power during his life, knowing the mental obliquity of Caius. Perplexed and irresolute he doubted what to do; by retiring from public life he, perhaps, hoped that the senate would buckle to its task, develop administrative powers, and prove a workable machine capable of carrying on the government and of checking the caprices of Caius. But the senate, which may be said to have had everything in its hands on the retirement of Tiberius, proved its incompetence. It had lost cohesion, and was resolved into an arena in which the rival aristocratic families, envenomed by jealousy, fought each other. Patriotism was dead. Each family strove for its own advancement, and sought it by the destruction of its rivals in wealth and power.

Tiberius was a man void of initiative ability. When the system of family props failed, he was incapable of devising something to take its place. He saw the dangers in store, but how to avert them he saw not. He despaired of the future, whereas a man of genius would have addressed himself to securing it. In hesitation, feeble as well as foolish, he died, seeing no alternative save the surrender of the throne to one or other of two boys equally incompetent to fill it. Caius succeeded, a mere boy, mad with conceit, and with a disordered brain, and speedily threw all into confusion. When he perished by the sword of a soldier, the nomination to the throne passed to the soldiery. The feebleness of Claudius made him accept the purple from the praetorians, and the youth of Nero unsuited him for association with the prince in his old age in the cares of government. Thus Nero came to the throne inexperienced in the art of government.

Had Nero been a man of sound brain and moral force, he might have recovered the principate from the dangers that menaced it. But he, like Caius, was insane, and the power to make and unmake princes fell altogether into the hands of the soldiery.

Herod had accepted the homage that was due to God alone, and was smitten with corruption. So also did Augustus accept divine honours; so, but with regret, once did Tiberius; so frankly, defiantly,

did Caius and Nero, and so languidly did Claudius. And the house that exalted itself to heaven was smitten down and extirpated to the last member.

One of the most instructive lessons taught us by the story of the early Caesars is the difficulty, the impossibility of establishing a moral law without religion. In the midst of the general decay of the moral sense, Augustus cast about for some means whereby to regenerate Rome after the ancient pattern of high honour, moral purity, and severe simplicity. He tried to restore the old healthy tone of the early Republic by enactments, but law could not effect what he desired. He appealed to patriotism; he appealed to the antiquarian sense, and then, when these proved inadequate, to religion. But religion was dead, it was without moral force; it was a sentiment, a superstition; it was no revelation. It came up out of man, but it came not down to man. In his own household Augustus endeavoured to revive the type of the ancient Roman life of simplicity and moderation, and failed utterly. No vague sentiment for the past could control the fiery Julia, no patriotism sober the princes Caius and Lucius drunk with flattery.

Tiberius, as well as Agrippina, would gladly have had the sons of Germanicus grow up self-restrained, dignified, and virtuous,—but the motives for a high life were wanting, ambition was the sole incentive to integrity that they could suggest, and that failed. The only means of keeping them from open and scandalous vice was to enclose them within walls beyond the reach of temptations they did not care to attempt to resist. What guarantee did that offer for their future when invested with power?

We find Agrippina the Younger desperately striving to bring up her son in the ways of sobriety, manliness, and virtue. She gave him the best teacher Rome then knew, Seneca. She set him the example of her own grave, strict, and simple life. But what availed her example? What the maxims of Seneca as constraining bonds on the boiling passions of youth, and the intoxication of despotic power? What indeed was the only basis of morality Seneca could lay? The personal Dignity of Man. But the stoic philosophy taught that man was an integral part of the Universe, governed by the inexorable decrees of Fate. The doctrine of the stoic could not support the moral fabric he endeavoured to rear on it, nay—it subverted all moral responsibility. There were then, as now, those unconscious of their personal dignity; and of such was Nero. There were others, natural prigs, and stoicism did no more than exhort men to be prigs for priggishness-sake. Seneca, therefore, could in his day give the young Nero nothing really sounder than what the father of Horace had given his son in the early days of the empire. Horace, with self-complacency, speaks of the moral training afforded him by his father, who had pointed to the broken fortunes and battered reputations of the dissolute and extravagant. It was like

bringing up a boy of the present age on the *Police News* and the society papers. But Horace's father had nothing else to give his son as a principle, as a law of life; and Seneca had nothing better to give to Nero—the one motive too poor to restrain Horace from the worst vices of that corrupt age, the other too weak to hold back Nero from dipping his hands in the blood of his mother.

Not till Juvenal, in his grand thirteenth satire, did men sound a solid bottom, and not till the torch of Christianity was held aloft was the conscience enlightened and instructed.

Every motive for a good life had been suggested, and none had succeeded save in a few individual instances: patriotism, antiquarian sentiment, love of popular applause, ambition, self-respect. None had proved cogent enough to hold mankind in the ways of temperance and justice. This was fully realised at last. What had failed in the family of the Caesars failed in every household. In the distress of men seeking for a basis of principle on which life might be ruled, Christianity found the minds of men ripe for its reception.

That at last was given without which the world had staggered on from lapse to lapse, in growing doubt and yet eager desire—a revealed moral code tough enough to restrain passion, lofty enough to raise man to look God face to face, sharp enough to carve and shape his heart and mind, and strong enough to transform and regenerate society.

XI.—PORTRAITS OF NERO.

1. A youthful bust in harness at Florence, No. 70. Conjectural, but probable.

2. Another, colossal, in the Capitoline Museum, in the Imperial Gallery, No. 15.

3. Another, with whiskers, in the Palatine collection, No. 17, the pleasantest in expression of all.

4. Bust with 'Newgate collar,' in the Capitoline Museum, No. 16. Much broken, but judiciously restored. (Fig. 114.)

5. Bronze head in the Vatican Library, bearded.

6. Bust at Naples with wreath of oak-leaves.

7. Splendid basaltic head in the Uffizi Gallery at Florence, No. 65, originally intended for a statue. Bernoulli thinks—I think quite mistakenly—that it is comparatively modern. (Fig. 116.)

8. A head at Catajo, of black marble, which closely resembles the basaltic head at Florence, but with a band round the head adapted for jewels, which are, however, all removed. Because this is obviously like the Florence basaltic head, Bernoulli mistrusts its antiquity.

9. A very similar type of head, with crown of rays much like the basaltic head at Florence; on a bust in toga, in the Louvre. This was

formerly at Versailles. The toga is modern. Traces of jewels remain in the crown.

10. Youthful statue found at Gabii, now in the Louvre. The head does not belong to the statue, though also found at Gabii. On a fragment that probably belonged to the trunk is the inscription TI·AVG, so that the statue was originally a Tiberius, but no head of Tiberius was found with it. The head is to my mind certainly intended for Nero, it is without the fat and double chin, which came later. It is mistakenly restored with a nose after that of Tiberius, and is labelled Tiberius.

11. Head and bust in the Louvre, from the villa Borghese, with beard and moustache. (Fig. 113.)

12. Splendid head in the British Museum, from Athens. It formerly belonged to a statue. (Fig. 118.)

13. Colossal head in the Glyptothek at Munich, from the Palazzo Ruspoli.

14. Another head in the same collection, related to that in the British Museum, from the Villa Albani.

15. Head and bust in the Uffizi Palace, Florence. (Fig. 107.)

16. Youthful bust at Naples.

17. Child's head in harness, in the Vatican. Conjectural, but not improbable.

18. Bust in the Louvre (No. 2178) in Nero Antiquo, from the Campana Collection, found near the Forum, Rome, a band round the head. Nose and chin restored. Larger than life. Genuine, but not very good.

19. Porphyry head at Madrid.

20. Bust in the Louvre. (Fig. 115.)

Several cameos and intaglios, but none of very conspicuous value. The medals are numerous and good

APPENDIX.

I. THE CONSTITUTION OF THE EARLY PRINCIPATE.

THE exact process whereby the imperial power was built up has not been revealed to us by the historians of the period, who concerned themselves more with military achievements, or with individual portraiture than with tracing the course of the encroachments of despotism, and of noting the origin of the powers out of which the imperial supremacy of the Caesars took its spring.

The Roman Republic at the time of Julius Caesar was in a condition that could not endure the strain to which it was subjected, unless it were materially modified. It was full of discordant elements, and all principle of cohesion seemed dissolved.

The people and the senate viewed each other with hostility. The soldiery obeyed their generals, and were indifferent to the senate. The army was not an integral whole, it consisted of legions quartered in Germany, in Gaul, in Spain, in Africa, and in the East. The time was long past when the army was made up of Roman, even of Italian yeomen. The legions were composed of foreigners drawn from every race dominated by Rome, snatched from their native soil and transplanted to the other ends of the Empire. Such soldiers had no sentimental or traditional ties attaching them to Rome. They obeyed their general, partly because they were habituated by the discipline of the camp so to do, partly because they looked to the general for plunder, largess, and double pay. They were ready to follow the general sword in hand into Italy or into Armenia, or across the Channel into Britain. It was all one to them where they went, whom they slew, so long only as plenty of loot fell to their share.

The governors of provinces in command of the legions were moreover pretty much their own masters. They made wars as they listed, extorted tribute as much as they wanted, or the provincials could pay. They viewed each other with jealousy, and it was inevitable that, flushed with money and with power, they should clash in open field. It was also inevitable that they should refuse to surrender their command at the demand of a senate impotent to enforce its orders. Affairs had reached this pass, that the only manner in which the senate could exact submission was by enlisting one of its generals against another.

The priestly colleges were a power in the State that could not be disregarded. The augurs were able to neutralise legislation, to throw the whole

conduct of affairs into confusion by their hocus-pocus. That representative aristocrat of the Roman republican oligarchy, Bibulus, did his utmost by this means to neutralise the attempts of Caesar to introduce his most salutary reforms, and Caesar only succeeded by treading his protests under foot with a disregard shared by few, and those only the most free from superstition.

The censorship, though its powers had greatly declined in the late Republic, was another important office. The censor determined the qualifications of those who aspired to enter the senate, and was also empowered to winnow that august body of its unworthy members. That this power was calculated to be used for partisan purposes was undeniable.

The courts of law again were notoriously corrupt, and vain efforts had been made to purify them. They were venal and they were partisan. No redress could be obtained in them by the harrowed provincials, and the plundering governor was obliged to pay his discharge from them when the inevitable impeachment came on his return to Rome.

The date usually and justly fixed for the inauguration of the imperial system is Jan. 13, 727 (B.C. 27), when Augustus resigned the temporary and extraordinary powers wherewith he had been invested, and proposed thenceforth to exercise rule on a strictly legal and constitutional basis.

The wiser heads in Rome had seen that a concentration of the several powers, civil, military, and sacerdotal, in one hand, was the only alternative to the ruin of the commonwealth through internecine strife of rival generals, the inroad of barbarians and the revolt of the provinces. And this is precisely the solution of the problem offered by Augustus. He did not aim at being a despot, but at knitting together the unravelled skeins and consolidating the republic which was falling to pieces.

The imperial power was founded on two assumptions or rather concessions: the one was the investiture of the prince with the *imperium proconsulare*, the other, the investiture with the *tribunicia potestas*.

Every provincial governor exercised the *imperium*, the sovereignty, in his province, and with that sovereignty had control over the military there stationed. The prince by his acquisition of the *imperium majus* obtained superior sovereignty over all the governors and provinces, or we may put the matter in another way, the power of the proconsuls and propraetors was reduced, and subjected to the supremacy of the holder of the *imperium majus*. The emperor was now the head of all the forces in every province, the sovereign authority over all the provinces was intrusted to him, and he could protect the governed against the rapacity of their governors. The soldiers were required to take oaths of allegiance to the prince; he alone had the right to raise troops. He appointed all officers, and conferred all military decorations—saving and excepting triumphs and the triumphal insignia. He moreover paid the soldiers through his pay-masters. Consequently privates and officers were bound to him by their oath and their interests alike. This was a most important step, and was designed to make civil war impossible, and it did prevent it till Nero, the last of the true Caesars, died. But the proconsular imperium gave the emperor no definite authority, conferred on him no power in Rome itself; it is moreover doubtful whether it gave him any in the Italian peninsula.

This power was accordingly supplemented by another—the *tribunicia*

potestas. The investment with the *imperium* established the material, the military domination of the prince; the object of Augustus in the assumption of the tribunician power was to gain a legal position, and authority at home.

The holder of the tribunician power was invested with all the privileges enjoyed by the tribunes of the people, and with something in addition. There can be little question that one purpose of conferring the title on the prince was that he might appear as the head and advocate of the people, and inherit the favour that the people had accorded to their officers.

ἡ γὰρ τυράννις τῆς προστατικῆς ῥίζης ἐκβλαστάνει.

The holder of this power however received it by decree of the senate, which was almost certainly submitted to and approved by the people in their comitia. The *dies imperii* rarely coincided with that on which the tribunician power was obtained. Tiberius was granted this latter in the lifetime of Augustus, and dated his reign from it, though Augustus was still alive during the earlier years of his tenure of the power.

The tribune of the people exercised his authority no further than within a mile of the walls of Rome, but the holder of the *tribunicia potestas* seems to have been enabled to exercise his throughout Italy, *i.e.* wherever he was restricted from exercise of his authority as holder of the *proconsulare imperium*. By virtue of the power conferred on him, his person was rendered inviolable: he had a right to veto any law in its passage through the senate, to convoke the senate, to exercise his *intercessio* to prevent the execution of sentences decreed by the senate or the courts of law, and the right of *prehensio*, *i.e.* of arresting any person, even a consul or a censor, and of imprisoning him.

The courts of law were three in number; these were all independent, but the emperor had the prerogative of mercy, and was thought to exercise a preponderating influence over his own court, and that of the praetors. It was to avoid this that the senate claimed and exercised the right to try, in senate assembled, certain cases that concerned themselves.

As *princeps senatus* the emperor's relation to the senate was indicated; as *censor* he was empowered to test the qualification of the members of that body, and to increase it at his pleasure; as *pontifex maximus* he stood at the head of the sacred colleges.

The title whereby the historians are pleased to designate the emperor is *princeps*, and that was the title that Tiberius regarded as best representing his position. He was head of the empire, of the provinces, of the army, of the senate, and of the plebs: he was head also of the religious bodies.

The usual order in which the titles were borne was Pontifex Maximus, Tribunicia Potestate (from the time of Tiberius), Imperator (from that of Claudius), Consul, Censor, etc. The prince was thus recognised in all his relations, and in every department, civil, sacerdotal, and military; but the title of *princeps* was never assumed on coins and monuments.

The scheme proposed by Augustus and pursued by Tiberius was to make of the empire a dyarchy, the control of the provinces being divided between the emperor and the senate, that is to say, certain provinces were subject to the senate, and others to the prince. So also in the courts, the

Senatorial Court was constituted to be independent of the courts subject to the emperor. So also with the finances: some of the public money was controlled by the senate, other by the prince. So also were certain magistrates appointed by the senate, others by the Caesar. It seems to me unquestionable that Tiberius endeavoured honestly to carry out this dyarchy, and to leave to the senate its full powers within its own sphere. His retirement to Capreae, especially after the fall of Sejanus, left the senate in a position to exert its powers freely and unfettered. The senate, however, manifested its incapacity to fulfil what was required of it. There were three elements that the emperor had to conciliate: 1. the senate, 2, the people, 3. the army. By giving large nominal powers to the senate, which only its own feebleness prevented it from making very real, and by becoming *princeps senatus*, he gained the senate; by means of the *tribunicia potestas* he conciliated the people; whilst his proconsular *imperium* gave him control over the army.

Such, taken very briefly, may be regarded as a summary of the powers of the early princes, and such is an outline of the constitution of the early principate.

II. TACITUS AND TIBERIUS.

In reviewing the case of Tiberius, as made out by Tacitus, it is essential to distinguish facts from the interpretation put on them by the historian, and genuine speeches, of which record was kept, from those put by him into the mouths of the speakers. It is necessary, above all, to be on one's guard against accepting the motives he reads into the minds of those who appear on his stage.

Once more, it is essential to understand the point of view from which Tacitus regards the Caesars, especially Tiberius; and also the character of his literary work.

With regard to his standpoint, there can be no question. He viewed the past from that of the aristocratic-republican party, and his estimate of the Caesars is unfavourable, because through them that party was deprived of its influence, power, and means of accumulating wealth. He, indeed, disclaims the intention of writing with partiality,[1] nevertheless his own feelings were deeply engaged, and he wrote for readers who were members of that oligarchy.

The *animus* displayed towards the Caesars is manifest from the first. He cannot mention the deaths of Hirtius and Pansa, the consuls in the campaign against Antony, without an insinuation that they were removed by Octavius, the latter by infusion of poison into his wound;[2] nor that of Caius without a hint that he was likewise and in like manner removed by Livia;[3] charges that never should have been made by a serious historian without evidence to give weight to them. Moreover, after he has allowed that the case against Piso, of having poisoned Germanicus, had broken completely down, he yet writes with the assumption that Germanicus was murdered by Piso, acting under the directions of Livia, the grandmother of Germanicus. With regard to the character of his literary work, it must be remembered

[1] *Ann.* i. 1. [2] *Ibid.* i. 10. [3] *Ibid.* i. 3.

that Tacitus wrote in a rhetorical age, and that rhetorical finish stood higher in the opinion of the cultured than historic truth.

Old writers on the art of painting give rules for the construction of a picture. The leading colours employed are to be repeated through the picture. Thus, a lady in crimson velvet must have some of the red pigment in her cheeks and lips, reflected in her hair, and reproduced in the background in sunset clouds; thereby welding the whole together into unity of tone. Tacitus observes a similar rule. His study of Tiberius is the most finished in his gallery. He has resolved to depict him in sanguinary tints, and to represent him as a sensualist. Accordingly, he introduces these colours and touches at the outset, with great skill, not because they were really to be found in the original, but because the rules of his art required it.

Thus, Tiberius no sooner appears than the first dash of the governing tint is thrown on the canvas. And because there were no facts to go upon, Tacitus puts what he requires into the talk of the people. Augustus being dead, they are supposed to say that Tiberius was chosen as successor, because the deceased prince had an insight into his sanguinary character, and thought that such a successor by contrast would enhance his own glory.[1] We know that the people could have said nothing of the sort, as they had had no grounds for suspecting cruelty in the shrinking son of Livia who loathed gladiatorial displays; but that mattered not to the rhetorician, he must strike his key-note which would govern the whole composition. So also with respect to the sensuality of Tiberius. The orgies of Capreae are prepared for by a touch of colour. Again, facts were lacking, and again therefore Tacitus has recourse to the popular tongue,[2] and represents the people as explaining the retreat of Tiberius to Rhodes, as due to his desire to indulge his base appetites in secret; whereas his real motives are obvious. The same attempt after artistic finish is observable throughout the picture. We have again and again the connecting threads picked up, touches of colour thrown in, in a manner that provokes admiration of the skill of the artist, but makes us question whether historic truth is not sacrificed to the exigencies of his art. This is specially noticeable when we come to the record of accusations, trials, and sentences. And then we are able, by means of the facts given, in a measure to judge whether the governing statement that introduces them is justified.

Again, in art, it is permissible to reduce such features as do not assimilate with the picture, or such as militate against its completeness as schemed by the painter. There can exist no doubt that Tacitus did thus deal with his facts. His intention is to paint Tiberius as a cruel despot. He introduces the record of a year's trials with a sentence in which he describes a reign of terror, then he enters into particulars, and gives such details as suit his purpose, but cuts out all detail from such cases as do not fit in with his scheme. This is very observable in his record of the years 33-35.

There were reasons why the oligarchical party should regard the first Caesars with animosity, and form about them an opinion relative to their public acts and private lives the reverse of favourable. At the close of the republican epoch, the senate was the administrative power, though the legislative was still nominally in the hands of the people in their comitia. The *imperium*, with military force at its back, was held by the

[1] *Ann.* i. 4. 10. [2] *Ibid.* i. 4.

governors of provinces, who were also commanders of the legions stationed in those provinces. Material power was therefore in the hands of those who commanded the legions in Gaul, in Africa, and in Asia, and between such as stood at the head of the greatest number of legions, rivalry leading to civil war was certain to ensue. And this civil war was also certain to continue till one among these governors had mastered the others. It had been so from the time of Sulla and Marius to that of Octavius and Antony, a period of half-a-century. This had become so obvious that the whole body of the Roman people, noble as well as populace and army, had acquiesced in the elevation of one man to be *princeps*, head of the commonwealth, both military and civil, as the only condition of escape from civil war and proscription. But when a new generation arose that knew not the horrors of that epoch of fratricidal carnage, there sprang up a sense of regret at the loss of power and independence among the nobility, and resentment against the Caesars who monopolised the sovereign *imperium*. This feeling of resentment went back to the earliest period of the principate, and enveloped Augustus.

But towards Tiberius the sense of dislike was still more pronounced, and rose into acts of hostility. With the exception of the conspiracy of Sejanus, all those attempts at revolt against Tiberius which were made during his principate originated among the oligarchy. One principal reason for this animosity lay in the protection he afforded the provinces against their extortions. If he could not find an honest man in the ranks of the aristocracy to fill an important place, he did not scruple to select one from among the knights. It was thus that Curtius Rufus rose to the praetorship under Tiberius, and Sulpicius Quirinius, 'not allied at all to the patrician family of the Sulpicii,' became his faithful servant, and Lucilius Longus his confidant. Under the republic appointments to provinces were for a year or two only, and each noble when he entered on a province set at once to work like a horse-leech to suck its blood, then, when gorged, he fell off and made way for another. But Tiberius not only sometimes appointed governors from the equestrian class, but he also maintained the same men in their proconsulates and propraetorships for a great many years,[1] and bade them remember that their duty was to shear and not to flay their flocks.[2] Formerly the provincials had no redress against their torturers. But under Tiberius, again and again the governors who had acted tyrannically were brought to justice;[3] and even when the prince was in failing health and at an advanced age, the complaint of the Jews against Pilate met at once with redress.

Under the republic the courts were so corrupt, that the nobles, with their long purses and powerful influence, were able to direct the judgments in their favour. It was no longer so under Tiberius. Without interfering with the magistrate who presided in court, he sat in a corner, listened to the trial, and by his presence prevented the miscarriage of justice.[4] And when a magistrate was convicted of receiving bribes, he had him displaced and punished.[5] One might have supposed that this purification of the springs of justice would have met with commendation from Tacitus, but not so—the action of the prince affected one of the main privileges of the oligarchy,

[1] *Ann.* i. 80.
[2] Suet. *Tib.* 32; cf. Tacit. *Ann.* iv. 6.
[3] *Ann.* i. 74; iii. 66, 70; iv. 13; 15, 19, vi. 29. Plin. *Hist. Nat.* xix. 110.
[4] Suet. *Tib.* 33; Tacit. *Ann.* i. 75.
[5] *Ibid.* vi. 31.

and was therefore condemned by him. The temper with which the historian regards the trials of noble personages is abundantly manifest in his pages. He condemns the prince for suffering those who were of illustrious families to undergo the penalties legally incurred by their scandalous crimes.[1]

Another reason for the formation of an opinion disadvantageous to Tiberius, was that the *optimates* had deluded themselves into believing that Drusus, the brother of Tiberius, and his son Germanicus, entertained the idea of the restoration of the republic, which meant the reinstatement of the nobles in their ancient positions of profit to themselves, and independence of law.[2] When both were dead, the party of the nobles attached itself to Agrippina and her children, not perhaps that they expected to find in them enthusiasm for the republican form of government, but because this family was actuated by deadly animosity to Tiberius. Among the noble families there circulated numerous epigrams, bitter and scurrilous, levelled against the prince, and private memoirs in which were collected all the scandal that had been imagined by foul hearts and angry spirits against the man who held the party down. By this means a myth favourable to Germanicus was formed, investing him with attributes he certainly never had, and another myth unfavourable to Tiberius, representing him as the monster he as certainly never was.

In the time when Tacitus lived this was the recognised view relative to Tiberius and Germanicus. When, however, the historian came to write his History, he was confronted with an array of facts that did not at all fit in with his preconceived notions. He found himself obliged to admit that Tiberius had ruled well, that he was frugal, that he spent his savings, not on public shows and splendid buildings, but in relieving debtors, in assisting cities and states oppressed with calamities; that he maintained the Roman Empire in peace, checked the ambition of the generals, who would have extended the frontiers by unprofitable wars; that the provinces were brought out of a condition of depression into one of prosperity. He was constrained to allow that so long as Tiberius lived under the eyes of the Roman people, he was chaste in life, and that he loathed bloodshed; that he urged on the senate to share with him the burden of government, that he cleansed the sources of justice, that he made strenuous efforts to correct the moral tone of Roman society, both by suffering the impeachment of members of families of the highest rank, making no attempt to screen those who were related to himself; but also by removing some of the occasions of corruption of morals. The historian was further obliged to admit that so long as the prince was present in Rome, he did interfere repeatedly between the victims and their judges, on the side of mercy, and that he repeatedly took measures to check the insolence of the professional delators, and to punish them.

But Tacitus was too deeply imbued with inbred prejudice, and too well aware how to colour his book so as to find favour with the reading public,

[1] iii. 22, 23, iv. 29. A curious instance of the manner in which Tacitus esteemed blue blood above personal worth is that of Curtius Rufus. The historian 'blushes to relate' that he was of ignoble birth, supposed to be son of a gladiator. He stood for the quaestorship, and Tiberius, who esteemed the man for his character, gave him his vote. When he heard the sneers of the noble competitors launched against Rufus for his humble origin, he said—and the words are noble words: Curtius Rufus videtur mihi ex se natus' (*Ann.* xi. 21).

[2] *Ann.* i. 33.

to represent Tiberius as he found him in the official records. He must conciliate these latter with the *chronique scandaleuse* that circulated among the aristocracy.

First of all Tacitus had to form a theory which would account for the discrepancy, and then to accommodate the facts to suit this theory. The theory he adopted was that Tiberius was inherently vicious and cruel, but that he put a constraint on himself at first, and dissembled. When he left Rome his dissimulation ceased, he cast aside the mask and revealed himself in his true character as licentious and cruel. There were no tokens of cruelty, none of dissolute morals so long as Tiberius was before the eyes of the world. Prosecutions and condemnations multiplied after he had withdrawn. And when he was no longer subject to prying eyes, imagination could run riot and impute every sort of turpitude to the old man living in solitude and study.

According to the representation of Tacitus, the life of Tiberius was one of dissimulation till he reached the age of seventy-three; first, because he feared Augustus; secondly, because he feared his mother Livia; thirdly, because he feared his favourite minister, Sejanus. The theory carries absurdity on its face; nevertheless Tacitus adopted it for want of a better, and set to work to accommodate facts to fit into this theory. The manner in which he does so is more ingenious than honest.

It is not possible for me in this place to follow Tacitus step by step and expose his disingenuousness. Nor is it necessary. This has been done very thoroughly by three competent scholars, and to them I must refer the reader. To what has been by them advanced against the trustworthiness of Tacitus, and for the clearing of the character of Tiberius, it is not easy to add much.[1]

Though I cannot in this place follow Tacitus throughout his misrepresentation of Tiberius, I may here give a few instances of the manner in which he colours the facts he relates so as to give them the tinge required by the picture he designs to paint.

Tiberius was generous enough in cases of real need and he was able to be generous, because he was a man of simple habits, and avoided extravagance and display. Because he did not lavish his means in shows to the people, or build splendid but useless monuments for the embellishment of the city, he is charged with miserliness, and yet Tacitus is constrained to tell of the princely way in which he poured forth his savings in cases of real necessity.

He gives at length the story of M. Hortalus, a young man of rank, the grandson of the orator Hortensius, a member of the illustrious Hortensian gens, which, though originally plebeian, numbered among its ancestors a tribune of the people, and the dictator who appeased the sedition of the oppressed Commons in B.C. 286, when they seceded to the Janiculum. M. Hortensius Hortalus had fallen into difficulties, and Augustus had made him a present of a very large sum to enable him to live up to his rank. After a while he had run through this sum, and he came with his children into the senate-house, interrupting the discussions, to ask additional relief. The senate was ready enough to help the noble pauper, but Tiberius objected to the busi-

[1] Sievers (G. R.), *Studien zur Geschichte der Römischen Kaiser*, Berlin, 1870, pp. 1-106; Freytag (L.), *Tiberius und Tacitus*, Berlin, 1870; Stahr (Ad.), *Tiberius*, 2d ed., Berlin, 1873; and *Tacitus, Geschichte der Regierung des Kaisers Tiberius*, Berlin, 1871. I have not seen *Dürr, Die Majestäts Prozesse unter Tiberius*, 1881.

ness of the day being thus broken in upon, and also to helping needy nobles out of the public treasury. He said, sensibly enough, 'If all that are poor come hither and clamour for relief, the public funds will be exhausted.' Then he turned to Hortalus, and said, 'Augustus indeed relieved you, but that was unsolicited, and not so as to establish a precedent that you should come begging to be helped out of the treasury whenever short of funds.'

The senate was offended, and Tiberius, seeing that his view of the matter was not that of the rest, yielded so far as to grant each of the sons of Hortalus 200,000 sesterces, and as there were four of them, that amounted to a sum of about £7200. Throughout his account Tacitus shows his disgust at the prince showing so little readiness to help the noble pauper out of the state chest. And he concludes with these words: 'Nor did Tiberius ever after show pity, though the house of Hortensius was fallen into shameful impoverishment.' So that the seven thousand pounds were also speedily frittered away.

The father of this man, Q. Hortensius Hortalus, was a notoriously profligate man, as we learn from Cicero, who found him in B.C. 50 at Laodicea, living with gladiators and other low company (*ad Att.* vi. 3). Valerius Maximus also mentions him as thoroughly disreputable. The same writer speaks of one Hortensius Corbio, who is probably the same as the M. Hortensius Hortalus of Tacitus, and he was a gambler and one of the vilest of men, who had squandered his estate in brothels.[1] We cannot be quite certain it is the same man, but we know enough of the family to be sure that it was thoroughly disreputable.

Tacitus throws the blame of the suicide of C. Sulpicius Galba on the prince. He says: 'Caius Galba, of consular rank, upon receiving a dismal letter from Caesar, which forbade him to undertake a province, fell by his own hand.'[2] Galba represented an ancient family, therefore he ought to have been given a province. Provinces were given to such men of no birth as Quirinius and Rufus. But Tacitus conceals the fact which Suetonius lets escape, that this C. Galba was a spendthrift who had squandered his paternal estate; so that he sought a governorship for the replenishment of his empty pockets. Tiberius very justly refused him the opportunity.

The death of the two Blaesi is laid to the charge of the prince because he denied them the priesthood. When the coveted offices were given to others, in sullen resentment they committed suicide. The family was illustrious, a branch of the Sempronian gens. What were the reasons that actuated the prince we do not know, but it is possible enough they were well founded, as in the case of Galba. They were not impeached; they killed themselves because they were passed over in the appointments of the prince.

M. Cocceius Nerva was an eminent jurist. Tacitus tells us that in the year A.D. 33, Nerva announced his resolution to starve himself to death. 'Tiberius having heard of it, sat down beside him, required to know his motives, adding entreaties, and even admitted that it would disturb his peace of mind, and be a stain on his reputation, if the nearest of his friends should kill himself without good reason. Nerva shunned conversing on the subject and immediately began to abstain from food. *It was alleged by such*

[1] 'Hortensius Corbio omnibus scortis abjectiorem et obscoeniorem vitam exegit: ad ultimumque lingua ejus tam libidini cunctorum inter lupanaria prostitit, quam avi pro salute civium in foro excubuerat.' (iii. 5.)

[2] Tac. *Ann.* vi. 40.

as knew his thought that the more he saw into the miseries of the State, the more transported he was with indignation and fear, and he resolved to die with honour unscathed.' So the death of Nerva is cast on Tiberius. However, from Dio we learn something that Tacitus has designedly suppressed, and that puts quite another complexion on the matter. In that year great distress arose in Italy owing to the condition in which debtors were burdened with charges from which they could not escape. The praetor complained in the senate of the condition of affairs, but could get nothing done to ease the debtors. In the senate sat the worst usurers who had their grip on the throats of the poor land-holders. The capitalists had called in their loans. Money was scarce. The senate passed a law requiring two-thirds of all mortgages to be on land,—so as to stimulate the transfer of landed property, and required that all embarrassed estates should be cleared within eighteen months. The object obviously was to force on a sale, that the great land-holders might complete the acquisition of all the soil of Italy.[1] Tiberius interfered. He saw that something must be done, and he proposed cancelling the debts. To this Nerva was opposed, as an illegal proceeding, and an act of injustice to the capitalists. The feelings of the prince were engaged on behalf of the impoverished debtors, and he persisted. Then it was that, in a sulk, Nerva killed himself. His death produced on Tiberius an effect his eloquence had failed to produce. He altered his scheme. He confirmed the senatorial decree that debts were to be regulated within a fixed term, but he emptied his own savings, from his privy purse into the banks, as a loan to the debtors, to be held for three years free of interest, to enable them to clear their estates.

These are but a few instances of the manner in which Tacitus gives a false colouring to facts, by the suppression of information which would qualify his statements. Let us now look at the manner in which he insinuates motives.

Tiberius and Livia did not attend the public funeral of Germanicus. Tacitus gives what he considers the reason. 'All knew how real was the joy, how hollow the grief of Tiberius for the death of Germanicus.' He takes as true the imaginings of the people of what they supposed passed in the mind of the prince.[2] 'Public lamentations Tiberius and Livia thought below their dignity, or perhaps they apprehended, that if their countenances were examined by all eyes, their hypocrisy would be detected.' Where did Tacitus discover this? In what authentic record?

In order to connect a suicide with Tiberius, and render him answerable for it, Tacitus has an ingenious method of making the man observe the demeanour of the prince and lose courage because that is threatening. In no document were the changing expressions of the countenance of Tiberius registered. For the sake of his art, Tacitus must tie his facts together with the red thread of the sanguinary purpose of the prince.

Thus Cn. Calpurnius Piso at his trial was 'mostly daunted by seeing that Tiberius exhibited no token of either pity or resentment, but remained silent and reserved, impregnable against every attempt to influence him.' So in the case of Cremutius Cordus, arraigned for having in his Annals praised the murderers of Caesar. He was fallen on by delators and hauled before the senate where sat Tiberius, to hear the case and record his vote

[1] Tac. *Ann.* vi. 16, 17; Suet. *Tib.* 48. [2] *Ibid.* iii. 3.

along with the rest. If the judgment went against Cordus, he could then interpose his tribunician intercession. Till the sentence had been pronounced he could do nothing. That he would have done so is more than probable. He had pardoned C. Cominius Proculus for lampooning himself only shortly before, and Votienus Montanus had been banished only, the same year, for publishing calumnies against the prince; but Cordus did not wait to hear his sentence. He committed suicide. In order to bespatter the prince, who was wholly guiltless, with his blood, Tacitus makes Cordus lose heart by seeing that Tiberius listened with stern face (*truci vultu*). How could Tacitus tell what passed in the mind of Cordus, and what was the expression on the face of Tiberius?

In the case of Piso above mentioned, the *animus* of the historian is obvious. The case of poisoning against Piso and Plancina had broken down absolutely. Piso was guilty of exciting civil war, and he knew that he was guilty. The prosecutors after his death desired to fall on Plancina and her sons. To Tacitus it was infamous that Tiberius should animate the sons to defend their mother, and interfere in her behalf when, according to his own showing, Plancina and the sons were wholly guiltless.

No sooner had Tiberius established his sovereignty than the senate began to heap titles on Livia and himself. She was to be the Parent, or the Mother of her Country; he was to be known as son of Julia. Tiberius very sensibly forbade this absurd adulation. Again, later, when the Spaniards sought to pay him divine honours, he peremptorily refused them. This Tacitus represents as showing a mean spirit and contempt for fame.

When Tiberius objected to the extravagant titles of honour offered to Livia, 'he was torn with jealousy (*anxius invidia*) regarding the elevation of a woman as the depression of himself.' When Livia was ill, Tiberius visited her. They then 'lived,' says Tacitus, 'in real unanimity or dissembled hate.' His visit was but a piece of hypocrisy. When, however, she died, Tiberius, then an old man of seventy-two, and full of infirmities, did not attend her funeral; he was in Capreae, she was buried in Rome, because, says Tacitus, 'he would not suffer this event to interfere with his pleasures (*nihil mutata amoenitate vitae*)'. He refused to allow divine honours to her memory, saying she had herself disallowed such, but this, according to Tacitus, was 'under a pretence of moderation (*quasi per modestiam*).'

In his first year of rule Tiberius assisted at the Augustal games, as they were in honour of his deified father by adoption. But he loathed these brutal exhibitions, and it was the only time in which he endured to be present. This is not allowed to pass by Tacitus without an insinuation; and when, later, Drusus, the son of Tiberius, gave the same sort of games and showed a savage delight in the bloodshed of gladiators, 'only vulgar blood,' says Tacitus,[1] then his father called him to task for it. Thereupon Tacitus adds: 'The absence of Tiberius from these shows was variously commented on: by some it was ascribed to his dislike of a crowd; by others to his austere genius, and his dread of being put in comparison with Augustus, who was a cheerful spectator of such sights. But that he thus purposely furnished matter for exposing the cruelty of his son, and for exciting popular hatred against him, is what I would not believe, though this also was asserted.'

And this Tiberius, who hates gladiatorial games, and rebukes his son

[1] Quamquam vili sanguine.

for liking them, is the monster who throws men over the cliffs at Capreae, and has sailors at the foot of the rocks to beat them to death with oars and marlingspikes![1] who draws near to Rome that he may hear of, if he cannot see, the streams of blood there flowing.[2] But this is not the only instance in which Tacitus contradicts himself.

At the commencement of the reign of Tiberius, Tacitus introduces a series of men who, he says, incurred the hatred of the prince, and were by him pursued with remorseless hate to their death. These are Asinius Gallus, Q. Haterius, L. Arruntius, and Mamercus Scaurus. Asinius Gallus, no doubt, was hated by Tiberius; he had cause to hate him. This man had married Vipsania, the dearly-loved wife whom Tiberius had been required by Augustus to put away; but that was not the worst. Asinius boasted that he had carried on an intrigue with Vipsania whilst she was the wife of Tiberius, and that he, not Tiberius, was in reality the father of Drusus. A greater, a more wounding insult, could not have been offered a man, and it wounded Tiberius in his tenderest feelings. But he did not use his power to avenge a private wrong. For *seventeen years* after Tiberius was invested with the principate, Asinius Gallus remained unmolested. Only then, when he became involved in the plot which had been formed against Tiberius, at the head of which were Agrippina and Nero, was he arrested, and then was allowed to remain under supervision and in restraint for over three years, without being dealt with severely. Not till A.D. 33 did Asinius die, and his death is thus recorded by Tacitus:—'That he perished by famine was not doubted; but whether of his own accord or by constraint was held uncertain. The emperor was asked whether he would suffer him to be buried. *He blushed not to grant this as a favour, and even went so far as to express regret that a casualty should have removed the accused before he was publicly convicted.*'

Tiberius allows his deadly enemy to live for twenty years, for seventeen in the unmolested enjoyment of his wealth and honours.

L. Arruntius was regarded with suspicion and dislike by the prince. Tacitus gives the reasons; because he was 'rich, energetic, accomplished, and in favour with the people,' as well as because Augustus had said he was worthy to succeed him in supreme power, and would one day put out his hand to seize it.

In 32, Arruntius was charged with high treason, and was not only acquitted, but his two accusers were punished. In 15 he had been appointed to regulate the course of the Tiber to avoid floods. In 27 he was nominated to the governorship of Spain, but was not suffered to proceed to his province, for some reason not stated, and he governed it by legates. In 37, when Tiberius was in his last sickness, and as we are assured by Tacitus, without his knowledge, Arruntius was arrested on the charges of adultery and treason; he then committed suicide.

Tiberius left this man, whom he hated and mistrusted, absolutely untouched for twenty-three years.

Yet of these two men Tacitus says: 'They were afterwards (*i.e.* after the accession of Tiberius, A.D. 14) cut off under imputations of various crimes, all concocted by Tiberius.' That this was not the case is proved by Tacitus's own showing.

[1] Suetonius, *Tib.* 62.

[2] Tacit. *Ann.* vi. 39.

Quintus Haterius was another 'who excited his jealous spirit.' He was an orator. Augustus said of his eloquence that it needed a drag-chain—it not only ran, but it ran downhill. He was a systematic legacy-hunter. Tiberius not only did not molest him, but advanced him to be *consul suffectus*, and he outlived this prince, and died in extreme old age and very wealthy.

A fourth man against whom the prince is said to have borne implacable resentment was Mamercus Scaurus. Nevertheless, he took no steps against him; on the contrary, he not only appointed him *consul suffectus*,[1] but when he was accused of high treason in 32, stopped the proceedings; and when Aemilia Lepida, his former wife, was condemned for having tried to pass off a child on her former husband, Quirinius, he interfered on his behalf to stop the confiscation of her estate, that her property might be saved for her daughter by Scaurus.[2] In 34 he was accused of adultery with Livia, the daughter-in-law of Tiberius, and of having composed a lampoon against the prince. He committed suicide; his accusers were thereupon banished.

In the trial of Aemilia Lepida, Tacitus endeavours to involve Tiberius in her overthrow. This lady, allied to the imperial house, had the bluest of blood in her veins, and, therefore, enjoys the sympathy of Tacitus. She was accused of adultery and of trying to pass off on her husband, Publius Quirinius—the Cyrenius of the Gospel—a man of no birth, but of merits, a child that was not his own. The case was a painful one, and Tiberius maintained an attitude of strictest impartiality, which is thus ungraciously treated :—'It was no easy matter to discover the heart of Tiberius, with such subtlety did he blend and disguise his feelings of indignation and clemency.' He would not suffer his son Drusus to vote first, lest the sycophant senate should suppose that the vote of Drusus indicated the wish of his father as to the sentence to be pronounced. A few years later Quirinius died, and for his distinguished services Tiberius asked that he might be accorded a public funeral. This is made a matter of animadversion, 'by reason of the danger Quirinius had brought on Lepida.' As if, forsooth, an honourable interment was to be denied a self-made man because he objected to having a child that was not his own foisted on him by his highly aristocratic wife.

In Book IV. 36, Tacitus says: 'Every open delator was as one whose person was sacred and inviolable.' But Tacitus admits that, in A.D. 20, Tiberius interposed in behalf of the accused, when these wretches had got all Italy in their clutches; and how again, in 22, he checked their audacity. Also in 34, 'when opportunity offered, the delators were surrendered to vengeance,' and we know of the names of *twenty-three* of the accusers who suffered punishment, besides others unnamed, and there is hardly a case on record in which an accuser enjoyed favour from the prince, certainly not one of a professional delator receiving advancement or reward. On the contrary, it would seem as though the fact of men in good position appearing in court or in the senate as accusers, put an end to their prospects of advancement in office. It must be remembered that there was no public prosecutor in Rome. Every

[1] In what year is not known. Both Tacitus and Seneca speak of him as a consular.

[2] The history of this Aemilia Lepida is not very clear. She was the daughter of Q. Aemilius Lepidus and Cornelia. She was twice married, first (probably) to Mamercus Scaurus (*Ann.* i. 13); secondly (probably) to P. Quirinius; and was betrothed to Lucius Caesar (*Ann.* iii. 23). By Scaurus she had a daughter. Mamercus Scaurus was twice married; first to Aemilia Lepida, and, secondly, to Sextia. The order of the husbands of Aemilia is not quite certain.

citizen was entitled to lodge an accusation. In the times of the republic each aspirant after fame so began his public career. Under the principate the system of impeachment was continued, and the accusers were either those who sought to push their fortunes as public pleaders, or who endeavoured to amass wealth by securing that portion of the goods of the accused which, by law, fell to the accuser, on condemnation. Not all accusers came under this last category. The names of accusers that occur in the *Annals* of Tacitus are the following: those marked with a cross suffered death.

Caepio Crispinus, i. 74.
Fulcinius Trio, + ii. 28; iii. 10; v. 11; vi. 4, 38.
Firmius Catus, + ii. 27; iv. 31.
Fonteius Agrippa, ii. 30.
C. Vibius Serenus, + ii. 30; iv. 29.
Publius Vitellius, + iij. 10; v. 8.
Q. Veranius, iii. 10.
M. Servilius, + iii. 22; vi. 30.
Ancharius Priscus, iii. 38, 70.
Considius Aequus, + iii. 37.
Caelius Cursor, + iii. 37.
Mamercus Aemilius Scaurus, + iii. 66; vi. 29.
Junius Otho, + iii. 66; vi. 47.
Brutidius Niger, + iii. 66; Juv. *Sat.* x. 83; Senec. *Suas.* vii.
Gellius Publicola, iii. 67.
M. Paconius, + iii. 67; Suet. *Tib.* 61.
L. Visellius Varro, iv. 19.
Q. Granius, iv. 21.
Vibius Serenus (Junior), + iv. 28, 29, 36.
Satrius Secundus, iv. 34.
L. Pinarius Natta, iv. 34.
Calpurnius Salvianus, + iv. 36.
L. Aruseius, + vi. 7, 40.
M. Sanquinius, + vi. 7.
Domitius Afer, iv. 52, 66.
Publius Cornelius Dolabella, iv. 66.
Latinius Latiaris, + iv. 68; vi. 4.
Porcius Cato, iv. 68.
Petilius Rufus, iv. 68.
M. Opsius, + iv. 68, 71 (uncertain whether he fell under Tiberius or under Caius).
Considius Proculus, + v. 8; vi. 18.
Haterius Agrippa, vi. 4.
Caecilianus, + vi. 7.
C. Cestius, vi. 7.
Julius Marinus, + vi. 10.
Q. Pomponius, vi. 18.
Cornelius, + vi. 30.
Abudius Ruso, + vi. 30.
Caius Gracchus, vi. 38.
D. Laelius Balbus, + vi. 47, 48.

It must be borne in mind that not all of these were professional delators. Let us now see how many of these received reward or encouragement.

Fulcinius Trio pushed himself forward to accuse Cn. Piso, to the vexation of P. Vitellius, Q. Veranius, and the other friends of Germanicus who had arranged the impeachment. He received a reprimand from Tiberius, but he was afterwards forward as an accuser,[1] was a friend of Sejanus, and, probably through his influence, became consul in 31. Directly the vizier fell, Trio turned and thrust himself forward as an accuser of the accomplices of Sejanus. In 35, however, he was himself threatened by accusers, and committed suicide.

C. Vibius Serenus was one of the accusers of Libo, in 16. He received the proconsulship of Further Spain, but was arraigned in 23 for misconduct in his province and executed. There is some uncertainty whether the Vibius who accused Libo is the same as the Vibius Serenus who was given the proconsulate. Anyhow it is not possible to say that he was rewarded for his conduct in the accusation of Libo. The appointments at the beginning of the principate were left in the hands of the senate, and Vibius actually inveighed bitterly against Tiberius for not rewarding the signal zeal he had displayed on the occasion of the conspiracy of Libo.[2]

P. Vitellius and Q. Veranius for having prosecuted Cn. Piso in 20 were rewarded with the praetorship, as a concession to the excited feelings of the partisans of Agrippina. Though Vitellius attached himself to Sejanus, he received nothing further, and was accused and fell in 31. He was no common delator like Fulcinius Trio.

Junius Otho had been a schoolmaster, he was praetor in 22, when he appeared as accuser of C. Silanus for his misconduct as proconsul of Asia. There was no question of the guilt of Silanus, and Otho was quite justified in impeaching him. He was advanced to be Tribune of the people in 37, and interposed his intercession when Acutia was accused of high treason. 'This,' says Tacitus, 'was the cause of his destruction,' but gives no particulars. The writer of the notice in Smith's *Biographical Dictionary* thinks that this was not the same man as the praetor in 22.

Satrius Secundus was one of the accusers of Cremutius Cordus in 25. He attached himself to Sejanus, but when in 31 during his consulship the favourite resolved on the assassination of Tiberius and Caius, and on seizing the principate for himself, Satrius betrayed the plot to Antonia, who informed the prince of it, and this led to the destruction of Sejanus. He was unrewarded. It is remarkable that he was unable to reach the ear of Tiberius directly. It had been the same in the case of the conspiracy of Libo. Catus the betrayer was refused admission by the prince, who also refused to act on the information forwarded to him, and it was not till afterwards on fresh information that Libo was arrested, and that on the accusation of Fulcinius Trio. It had been the policy of Tiberius at the first not to go further into conspiracies than was necessary. When the false Agrippa appeared in Italy, and at Ostia, he was seized, but 'though many of the prince's household, many knights and senators were said to have supplied him with money, and assisted him with their counsels, yet no inquiry was instituted.'[3]

[1] 'Celebre inter accusatores Trionis ingenium,' ii. 28. [2] iv. 29. [3] ii. 40.

There is accordingly no evidence produced by Tacitus that Tiberius encouraged delators, there is a good deal to show that he not only discouraged them by denying them his favour and his presence, but that he also took active measures against them.

The delators were actuated by rancour, jealousy, and avarice; no princely wire-puller was required to set them in motion. If those accused were nobles, it mattered nothing to Tacitus that they were really guilty, he conceived that the prince should have interfered in their behalf, and because he did not do so, he is accused of being guilty of their blood. With just as much right might the Queen of England be charged with the death of all the murderers who perish on the gallows in her reign, because she does not exercise the royal prerogative on every occasion to save them from the penalty incurred by their crimes.

Tacitus states that delatorships dated from the principate of Tiberius.[1] What is true is that at this epoch, it began to be practised as a system of monetary speculation. He wrote after the Domitian reign of terror, and supposed that, because there were many impeachments for high treason in the time of the earlier princes, that therefore those who brought the charges were probably acting as agents of the prince, as they had under Domitian. But not a particle of evidence is forthcoming to show that it was so: on the contrary, by Tacitus's own showing, there is much to lead us to conclude that this was not the case. There were remorseless speculators then, as there are remorseless speculators now, who cared nothing what misery and ruin they produced, so long as they were able to transfer some of the fortune of their victims into their own coffers. We will now pass from the delators to the trials and executions that are recorded as having taken place during the twenty-three years of the principate of Tiberius, and see whether Tacitus is justified in drawing the inferences from them that he does.

We will not begin the list with the year 14, because in it there were two executions but no prosecutions, and there is no evidence that either was ordered by Tacitus.

The case of Agrippa Postumus has been dealt with in the life of Tiberius in the body of this work. The other case was that of Sempronius Gracchus, who had been the paramour of Julia, and had indited the letters that had incensed Augustus against Tiberius; Augustus had banished Gracchus to an isle off the African coast, when he discovered the immoralities of his daughter. Immediately on the news of the accession of Tiberius reaching Africa, Gracchus perished; how, is admittedly uncertain. Almost certainly Tiberius had no hand in his death. In the first year he was most scrupulous to avoid the appearance of assumption of power, independent of what was accorded him by the senate. He was always a stickler for legal forms, and at that period would have been careful not to give an order that was not strictly within his legal power. Decius Silanus, 'who had debauched the grand-daughter of Augustus,' and had likewise been banished by Augustus, he suffered to return, and left unmolested, because, as he said, he had been deported without any trial and condemnation.

In all probability, when Gracchus heard that the man he had so deeply wronged had acceded to power, he committed suicide. Tacitus does not venture to assert that he was put to death by order of Tiberius, he contents himself with insinuating it.

[1] i. 74; ii. 27.

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15. 1. Falanius, accused of taking an actor into a club of 'cultores' of the divine Augustus, and of having sold a statue of the late prince (i. 73, Dio, lvii. 24).

Case dismissed by Tiberius.

2. Rubrius, accused of having sworn falsely by the name of Augustus (i. 73).

Case dismissed by Tiberius.

3. Granius Marcellus, accused of speaking disrespectfully of the prince, and of having set the statue of Marcellus above that of Caesar; and of having taken off the head of a statue of Augustus, and replaced it with one of Tiberius (i. 74. Suet. *Tib.* 57).

Case dismissed by Tiberius.

Three cases of treason, in all the prince interferes in the cause of justice and reason.

16. 4. M. Libo Drusus, accused of insurrectionary attempts. Committed suicide (ii. 27-32; Suet. *Tib.* 25; Dio lvii. 15; Senec. Sp. 70).

Tiberius solemnly swore that he would have pardoned Libo, had the trial come to a conclusion and condemnation.

5. Clemens, a slave pretending to be Agrippa Postumus, and stirring up insurrection (ii. 40).

Executed. *No inquisition made into who were his abettors.*

In this year two cases of treason, one of execution.

17. 6. Apuleia Varilla, kinswoman of the imperial house, accused of scurrilous speeches against the deceased Augustus, and against Livia and Tiberius.

Tiberius and his mother begged that the words spoken against them might be passed over.

She was then accused of adultery, and banished within a hundred miles of Rome (ii. 50).

7. Manlius, the paramour of Apuleia, was banished (ii. 50).

18. No cases.

19. No cases.

20. 8. Cn. Calpurnius Piso, accused (*a*) of poisoning Germanicus; (*b*) of having stirred up civil war. The first charge failed. Of his guilt under the second no doubt could be entertained. He committed suicide.

9. Munatia Plancina, his wife. Involved in the charge of having poisoned Germanicus.

Tiberius interfered to remove her from trial, the case of poison brought against her husband having broken down (iii. 17).

10. 11. Cn. Piso and M. Piso, their sons involved in the same charges.

Tiberius interfered to obtain their acquittal and the mitigation of the sentence of confiscation decreed against their father's estate (iii. 17).

12. Aemilia Lepida, accused of adultery and trying to pass off on her husband a child not his.

Banished. *Tiberius interfered to preserve her estate from confiscation* (iii. 22, 23; Suet. *Tib.* 49).

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21. 13. Anna Rufilla, accused of using scurrilous language.
Imprisoned. Drusus stopped this scandal, certainly with his father's approval (iii. 36).

14. Magius Caecilianus, accused of high treason.
Acquitted, and his accusers punished (iii. 37).

15. Caesius Cordus, proconsul of Crete. Accused of official plunder.
Sentenced to disgorge (iii. 38. 70).

16. Antistius Vetus, accused of entering into confederacy with Rhescuporis of Thrace against his nephew Cotys, with whom he shared the kingdom. Rhescuporis treacherously murdered his nephew. Vetus, a Macedonian, was involved in this atrocious case.
Banished to an island (iii. 38).

17. C. Lutorius (or Clutorius) Priscus, accused of reciting a poem he had composed presupposing the death of Drusus. Sentenced to death.
Tiberius interfered to require ten days to intervene between sentence and execution, to avoid such another miscarriage of justice[1] (iii. 49-51; Dio lvii. 20, 27; Suet. *Tib.* 72; Senec. *Tran. Animae* 14.)
In the seven years 15-21, the only cases of execution for high treason were those of the false Agrippa, and that of Luterius, which took place in the absence of the prince.

22. 18. C. Junius Silanus, accused of oppression of his province, 'violating the divinity of Augustus, and despising the majesty of Tiberius.'
Banished; but *Tiberius interfered to mitigate the severity of the sentence* (iii. 66-69).

19. L. Ennius, accused of having converted an effigy of the prince into 'the ordinary purposes to which silver is applied.'
The case stopped by Tiberius (iii. 70; Dio lvii. 24).

23. 'On a sudden Tiberius began to tyrannise, or encourage and support others in tyrannical proceedings' (iv. 1).

20. C. Vibius Serenus, proconsul of Further Spain, accused of oppression in his province.
Banished (iv. 13).[2]

21. 22. Carsidius Sacerdos and C. Sempronius Gracchus accused of being in communication with the enemy of Rome, Tacfarinas.
Both acquitted (iv. 13).

23. Lucilius Capito. Imperial procurator in Asia, accused of oppression and ill-treatment of the provincials.
Tiberius, though Capito was his own domestic officer, '*with earnestness disclaimed any desire of screening him.*' Banished (iv. 15; Dio lvii. 23).

24. 24-25. C. Silius and his wife, Sosia Galla, accused of (α) treasonable correspondence with the enemy; (β) oppression and plunder of their province. The first count was abandoned. Silius committed suicide, Sosia was banished. Tacitus admits their guilt. In this trial M. Lepidus, an intimate friend of Tiberius,

[1] Tacitus admits that Tiberius praised M. Lepidus who advocated a milder sentence.

[2] Tiberius did *not* interfere to screen a great rascal, although Serenus had been active in the prosecution of Libo.

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almost certainly with his approval, moved for leniency (iv. 18-20; Vell. Pat. ii. 130).

26. L. Calpurnius Piso, brother to Cn. Piso, accused of treasonable words uttered in private, and L. Piso died whilst the case was in progress. 'Neque peractus ob mortem opportunam' (iv. 21).

27. Cassius Severus, who had been banished at the close of the reign of Augustus for abusive language, again charged with the same offence.

Mulcted in money and sent to another island (iv. 21).

28. M. Plautius Silvanus, accused of having murdered his wife. No doubt about his guilt.

Committed suicide (iv. 22).

29. Numantia, his former wife, accused of having used incantations.

Acquitted (iv. 22).

30. C. Vibius Serenus, the banished pro-consul, accused of high treason, and of having endeavoured to provoke an insurrection in Gaul.

Sentenced to death. *Tiberius interfered and modified the sentence into banishment.*

31. 32. Cn. Lentulus and Seius Tubero, two old friends of Tiberius, accused of being involved in the same conspiracy.

Both acquitted (iv. 29; Dio lvii. 24).

33. Cn. Cominius Proculus, accused of having composed scurrilous verses on the prince.

Tiberius pardoned him (iv. 31).

34. P. Suillius Rufus, accused of selling judgment in court.

Banished (iv. 31).[1]

35. Catus Firmius, a delator, accused of producing a false charge against his own sister.

Banished, but *Tiberius interfered*, and his sentence was mitigated to expulsion from the senate (iv. 31).

25. 'I have only to record cruel mandates, incessant accusations, faithless friendships, the ruin of the innocent, and the causes of their destruction, all much alike to satiety' (iv. 33).

36. Cremutius Cordus, accused of having praised Brutus and Cassius in his Annals.

Committed suicide. His books ordered to be burnt (iv. 34-35; Dio lvii. 24).

37. Sextus Marius, accused by Salvianus during the Latin feast. Accusation not specified.

'*This prosecution was openly resented by Caesar*, and was the cause of the exile of Salvianus' (iv. 36). Case dismissed.

38. C. Fonteius Capito, pro-consul of Asia. Accusation unspecified.

Acquitted (iv. 36).

39. Votienus Montanus, accused of calumnies against the prince.

Banished to the Balearic isles (iv. 42; Euseb. Chron.).

40. Aquilia, accused of adultery.

Banished (iv. 42).

[1] *Tiberius interfered*; owing to his having been a friend of Germanicus he was being lightly punished. Tiberius earnestly enjoined severer measures 'in the interest of the commonwealth.' Subsequent events proved that Tiberius was right in his estimate of the man.

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41. Apidius Merula, accused of refusing to swear by the acts of the deified Augustus.

Expelled the senate (iv. 42).

26. 42. Claudia Pulchra, accused of adultery and sorceries against the prince.

Sentenced probably to exile, and with her

43. Furnius, her paramour (iv. 52; Dio lix. 19).

27. 44. Quintilius Varus, accused of treason.

Process stopped by the senate (iv. 56).

28. 45. Titius Sabinus, accused of high treason and conspiracy against Tiberius. The prince referred the case to the senate, adding his testimony that to his certain knowledge, 'Sabinus had corrupted some of his freed men, and had aimed at his life' (iv. 68-70; Dio lviii. 1).

Condemned and executed.

Consequently we have in the seven years 22-28 *one* execution for high treason.

29. 46. Agrippina, accused by Tiberius in the senate of 'haughty demeanour and a turbulent spirit' (arrogantiam oris et contumacem animum incusavit).

47. Nero, her eldest son, accused at the same time of gross sensuality (v. 3).

If, as is probable, they were both engaged in a conspiracy against Tiberius, it is obvious that this accusation was couched in the most forbearing terms, and was intended as a caution to them. The senate not taking the matter up, Tiberius removed it to his own court, and both were sentenced to deportation to solitary islands where each died later (vi. 23-25).

30. (Record lost. We are able, however, to supply a list of the trials from Dio, etc.)

48. Drusus, the second son of Agrippina, who had betrayed the plans of his elder brother, was arrested and placed in confinement on the Palatine Hill. Whether there was a trial or not we do not know. Probably he was insane. He died in prison, A.D. 33.

49. L. Arruntius, an enemy of Sejanus, accused at his instigation, was discharged, certainly *through the interference of Tiberius*, as no one else would have dared to oppose the favourite (vi. 7).

His accusers were punished.

50. Vallius Syriacus, the rhetorician, was put to death, as a friend of Asinius Gallus. We know no particulars (Dio lviii. 3).

31. (Record incomplete.)

51. L. Aelius Sejanus, accused of high treason and a plot to assassinate the prince and Caius, and seize on the principate.

Executed. (Dio lviii.)

52. Curtius Atticus, one of the companions of Tiberius at Capreae, at the instigation of Sejanus before his fall, put to death (iv. 58).

53-55. Aelius Gallus and the younger son and daughter of Sejanus, were put to death (v. 9; Suet. *Tib.* 61).

56. Fufius Geminus, consul suffect, a partisan of Sejanus, probably

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engaged in his plot, was accused and sentenced, but forestalled execution by suicide. His wife killed herself. (Dio lviii. 4, 5).

57-58. Eudemus and Lygdus, the murderers of Drusus, son of Tiberius, tried by him *in camerâ* and executed (vi. 8; iv. 3. 11; Suet. *Tib.* 62).

59. T. Ollius (name lost, but probably Ollius, *Ann.* xiii. 45), accused of friendship with Sejanus.
Committed suicide (vi. 1).

60. P. Vitellius, accused by informers of offering to provide money from the exchequer over which he presided, in aid of a revolt.
Died unsentenced (v. 8; Suet. *Vitel.* 2).

61. P. Pomponius Secundus, accused of having harboured a condemned man.
Acquitted (v. 8).

32. 62. Junius Gallio. Expelled the senate and banished for having proposed to give to the praetorian soldiers who had served their time rank with the knights (vi. 3; Dio lviii. 18).

63. Sextius Paconianus, accused by letter by Tiberius of having been employed by Sejanus to contrive the assassination of Caius.
Condemned (vi. 3), but escaped by turning evidence against

64. Latinius Latiaris, involved in the same conspiracy.
Condemned, but to what is not stated (vi. 4).

65-66. Memmius Regulus and Fulcinius Trio. They had been consuls the preceding year and had quarrelled, and made random charges against each other. Haterius Agrippa impeached them for not prosecuting each other.
Both acquitted (vi. 4).

67. Cotta Messalinus, 'accused of a multitude of crimes,' those specified are, having given Caius a foul nickname, and of having spoken flippantly of Tiberius and Livia.
Convicted by the senate, he appealed to the *prince who interposed his 'intercession,'* and his accuser was punished (vi. 5, 7).

68-69. Q. Servaeus and Minucius Thermus, accused by C. Cestius, acting for Tiberius, of high treason (vi. 7).
Condemned, but escaped by turning evidence against

70-71. Julius Africanus and Seius Quadratus.
Sentence unrecorded (vi. 7).

72. M. Terentius, accused of friendship with Sejanus.
Acquitted, and his accuser punished (vi. 8).
[Sextus Vistilius, having been denied admittance to the prince's table for having spread scandalous reports relative to the moral conduct of Caius, committed suicide. Tiberius wrote to the senate to explain the cause of his death.]

73. L. Sejanus, accused of having turned Tiberius into public ridicule.
Tiberius interfered to have the case dismissed (Dio lviii. 19).

74-78. Annius Pollio, Appius Silanus, Mamercus Scaurus, Aemilius Scaurus, Calvisius Sabinus, Vinicianus Pollio, accused of high treason (vi. 9).

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Appius and Calvisius acquitted. *The rest discharged at the intervention of Tiberius.*

79. Vibia, mother of Fufius, accused of having wept for the death of her son. So says Tacitus, but we may strongly suspect that he is not telling the whole truth.

Sentenced to death (vi. 10).

80-82. Geminius, Pompeius, and Julius Celsus charged with conspiracy. Probably this Geminus was a son of Fufius Geminus, or a brother, and there is probably some connection between the accusation of Vibia and his arraignment.

Celsus committed suicide, the other two were executed.[1]

83. Rubrius Fabatus, accused of desertion to the Parthians (vi. 14).

Acquitted.

84-85. Vescularius Flaccus and Julius Marinus, spies of Sejanus, were tried by Tiberius in his own court, and sentenced to death. In all probability they had been engaged in the plot to assassinate the prince and Caius.

33. 'The whole band of accusers broke loose upon those who increased their fortunes by usury.'

86. Considius Proculus, accused of high treason.

Executed (vi. 18).

87. His sister, Sancia, banished.

88-92. Pompeia Macrina, and other members of her family, accused of heresy, the unauthorised worship of Theophanes, an ancestor, of whom a medal exists with the title θέος on it, attributed to Theophanes.

Two were punished, probably banished, 'Argolicum, Laconem, Caesar adflixerat.'

Pompeia was banished, and two committed suicide. An odd case, about which we do not know enough (vi. 18).

93. Sextus Marius. Accused of incest.

Executed (vi. 19).

94. Asinius Gallus died in prison of old age or privation. He had been involved in the conspiracy of Nero and Agrippina, but had not been tried and condemned. He had been committed to the care of a magistrate, who was responsible for his production when required for trial.

95. Plancina, 'prosecuted for notorious crimes.'

Committed suicide.

Of the ten cases in this year, two were punished with death, but one was for an infamous crime. It is significant that Tacitus omits to tell us anything about the only case of capital sentence for high treason. We may suspect that it was richly deserved.

34. 'At Rome, the destruction of her citizens continued without intermission' (vi. 29).

96. Pomponius Labeo, accused of maladministration of his province,

[1] Apparently these cases, five in all, added to that of Fufius Geminus and his wife in 31, have been magnified by Tacitus into a clean sweep of the adherents of Sejanus who were in prison (vi. 19), and Suetonius has further exaggerated this into twenty executions in one day.

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committed suicide, as did also his wife, who was not accused (vi. 29; Dio lviii. 24).

97. Mamercus Aemilius Scaurus, accused of adultery with Livia, daughter-in-law of Tiberius, and of having composed a pasquinade against the prince.

He and his wife, who was not accused, committed suicide together. His delators were banished (vi. 29).

98. Lentulus Gaetulicus, accused of having been a friend of Sejanus.

Acquitted. *Tiberius intervening*, and his accusers were banished (vi. 29).

The 'destruction of citizens' in this year resolves itself into two guilty men committing suicide, and two sentimental ladies doing the same, and several delators being banished.

35. 'Tiberius, not so far appeased by time, supplications, and glut of blood,' continues his remorseless tyranny (vi. 38).

99. Fulcinius Trio, under threat of accusation by informers,—

Committed suicide, 'weary of life' (vi. 38).

100. Granius Marcianus, accused of high treason,—

Committed suicide (vi. 38).

101. Tarius Gratianus, accused of high treason. No particulars of this case given.

Executed (vi. 38).

102. Trebellienus Rufus, accused of high treason. No particulars given.

Committed suicide (vi. 39).

103. Sextus Paconianus, a second time accused. Was executed in prison for having there composed a pasquinade against Tiberius (vi. 39. Probably the Paconius of Suet. *Tib.* 61).

36. 104-105. L. Aruseius and another (Sanquineus). Charge not stated, or lost from the fragment of Tacitus. But we learn elsewhere that they had been false accusers of L. Arruntius in A.D. 30. What their present accusation was we do not know.

Both executed (vi. 40).

106. Vibulenus Agrippa, no charge specified. Sentenced to death; committed suicide. It is significant that Tacitus, who gives full particulars of the death, is silent relative to the crime laid to his charge (vi. 40; Dio lviii. 21; Suet. *Tib.* 61).

107. Tigranes (v.), of Armenia; never recognised by his subjects; for some reason or other was impeached and executed.

108. Aemilia Lepida, widow of Drusus, son of Germanicus. She had been seduced by Sejanus, and was now charged with adultery with a slave. 'Nor was there any doubt about her guilt.'

She committed suicide (vi. 40).

It is remarkable that in this year, though four executions are recorded, yet we are not informed of the crimes for which those who perished were accused. Had the charges been for high treason, surely Tacitus would have said so.

37. 'At Rome were sown the seeds that were destined to yield a harvest of blood after the decease of Tiberius' (vi. 47).

109. Acutia, widow of P. Vitellius, charged with high treason.

Condemned, probably to banishment (vi. 47).

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37. 110. Albucilla, widow of Satrius Secundus, 'infamous for her many amours,' was charged with adultery, and with impiety to the prince (vi. 47).

111-116. Cn. Domitius, C. Vibius Marsus, Laelius Balbus, Pontius Fregellanus, L. Arruntius, and Carsidius Sacerdos. Accused of being the paramours of Albucilla. Tiberius knew nothing of those prosecutions, as he was in his last sickness.

Arruntius committed suicide; Domitius and Marsus escaped punishment; Laelius Balbus and Sacerdos were banished; Fregellanus was expelled the senate (vi. 47-48).

117. The mother of Sextus Papinius, accused of having driven her son to suicide by her licentious conduct, was banished for ten years (vi. 49).[1]

Of these 117 cases there were 54 of high treason. There were from 8 to 10 of murder, 20 of adultery or other sensual crimes, and if we add the two sons of Agrippina that makes 22.

There were seven of ill-treatment of provincials and corruption of justice.

Tiberius interfered to mitigate a sentence or to pardon in 25 cases, and in the cause of justice two or three times as well. There were 36 acquittals, 23 executions in 23 years.

Tiberius himself condemned to death only seven persons. (1) The false Agrippa; (2, 3) the two murderers of his son Drusus; (4, 5) two spies of Sejanus; (6, 7) two other companions at Capreae. He also obtained the condemnation by the senate of Sejanus and Sabinus.

Some of those who come in the above list, recur, so that the number of persons tried was not so great as 117.

Freytag in his examination of the trials under Tiberius reckons them at 134 persons and 147 trials, but then he counts separately each condemnation of a delator unable to prove his case, and he adds 20 as that of the victims, names unknown and probably never recorded, in 33, when, according to Tacitus, the prince ordered the summary clearing of the prisons. To do this would have been contrary to the practice of the prince who was pedantic in his adhesion to legal forms, and neither Tacitus, nor Suetonius, nor Dio is able to give by name a single person who was thus treated.

Mr. Furneaux, in the introduction to his edition of Tacitus, is obliged to admit that the rhetorical statements of his author are not fully borne out. He accepts the 'immensa strages' of Tacitus, but is disposed to reduce the numbers to those stated by Suetonius, which is an inversion of what we have usually to do with the accounts given by that writer. Supposing that the number was twenty, he says 'when all allowance is made, probably from 80 to 100 lives in all may have perished in the six years' reign of terror.' I cannot see that there is evidence worth anything that the number was even a quarter of a hundred in the entire reign of the prince.

Mr. Furneaux goes on to say:—'Distinctions must be again drawn. Much noble and much innocent blood, no doubt (?), was shed; but much that was noble was probably not innocent, and much was neither noble nor innocent, but that of the creatures of Sejanus, who had staked their claims

[1] To the list may be added a certain Carnulius, of whom Suetonius tells that he was accused and committed suicide, whereupon Tiberius said: 'Carnulius has escaped me.' But, then, of this case we know nothing from other sources.

on his success. None need pity Latinius Latiaris, Vescularius Flaccus, Julius Marinus, Fulcinius Trio, or any others of the like description ; nor is anything recorded even of so prominent a man as Asinius Gallus, or of many others, which would make them deserving of special sympathy.'

We come now to another consideration that tends to deepen our distrust of the representations of Tacitus. As already pointed out, the enormous majority of both trials and condemnations took place in the senate. We have indeed at the outside but seven in the court of the prince.

It is certainly significant in a high degree that not a single case of the condemnation of the innocent, not a single case of the straining of justice to effect the destruction of any man, is recorded in the praetorian courts.

Anciently the senate was not a court of justice, it heard cases exceptionally—they were such as that of the spread of the orgies of Bacchus, affecting the religion and morals of the commonwealth. Cicero indeed impeached Catilina and his confederates in the senate, and pressed for capital condemnation. Caesar contended that this was a contravention of legality, that there were the properly constituted courts to which Catilina and the other conspirators should be referred. He warned the senate against the establishment of such a precedent.

There were three judicial authorities under the principate. In the time of the republic, there had been but one, the praetorian. There were now the praetorian courts, the senate, and the court of the prince. It was thought monstrous, when, under the Emperor Claudius, Valerius Asiaticus was heard and condemned by the Emperor 'intra cubiculum' without being allowed to appeal to the senate (*neque data senatus copia*).

The criminal jurisdiction of the senate was a new thing under the principate. We have no statement as to how it came to be exercised. Probably it was part of the compromise. The prince by virtue of his tribunician power might at any time intervene and mitigate or remit a sentence of this court. The prince could assist, and both Tiberius and Claudius did assist, in the ordinary praetorian courts, and when among the jury the votes for condemnation were but one above those for acquittal the prince gave his '*calculus Minervae*' so as to balance the numbers and discharge the accused.

The senate claimed their court as that in which cases concerning their own class should be heard. They would be tried by their peers. Julius Caesar had remonstrated, in the case of Catilina, against converting the senate into a criminal court. Tiberius spoke of it as unusual, when Piso was tried before the senate. But the senate would have it so—and they suffered for so doing.

Tacitus tells us of one hundred and ten trials before the senate, with the consequences of strangulation in prison, suicide and confiscation. He tells us of no single case of the kind in the praetorian courts.

This fact in itself shows that the cause of the evils was not what Tacitus would have us believe. If senators were the victims, they fell before accusers from their own body, and were condemned by their own body, and by the officers of their own body were strangled and cast down the Gemonian stairs.

It may be admitted that the reign of terror was during the last years of the principate, but that fact tends to relieve Tiberius of the odium of having

occasioned it. It shows that directly he was removed from Rome, those elements of envy, rancour, avarice, which he had held in check, broke loose.

The glamour of the genius of Tacitus still dazzles his readers. But let the student put aside all the motives insinuated, note the reticences of the historian, observe the use he makes of the gossip of the capital, and confine his attention to the facts given, and he will probably come to the conclusion that the case of Tiberius has been grossly misrepresented.

It is remarkable how little is added by other historians and biographers. A few names of victims from the period the record of which is lost from the manuscript of Tacitus, not one from the years where that record is complete. When Tacitus speaks of those who suffered death under Augustus—he mentions 'the (i. 10) Varrones, the Egnatii, the Iuli, put to death.' There was but one Varro, one Egnatius and one Iulus Antonius who suffered; each is multiplied into a rhetorical plural. So for tragic effect does Suetonius deal with the facts, and no trust whatever can be placed on his statements.

One word, moreover, I may be permitted to add relative to the orgies of Capreae. The vilest, the most disgusting accusations were brought against Cicero, to his face, in the forum, by Q. Fufius Calenus.[1] Who believes them? no one—because we have Cicero's own letters, and by them we can estimate his character. Fifty years after his death the same sort of stories are told of Tiberius. We have not his memoirs or his letters, and the world has believed these stories, on the *ex parte* and unsubstantiated words of political enemies. Why should they be worth more than the hateful stuff flung by Calienus at Cicero?

It is a singular fact that Tertullian, the Christian apologist, should not have shared in the traditional misrepresentation of the reserved and prudent prince; he says that Tiberius so venerated Jesus Christ, from what he heard of His life and teaching, that he proposed to the senate that He should be elevated to be of the number of the gods. The senate refused to entertain the proposal, but Tiberius would not suffer any accusations to be brought against those who were His disciples.[2] The statement is curious, for it shows that apart from the received opinion among the aristocratic class, there lingered on in other classes a view of the character of Tiberius in every point the reverse, so that the Christians held that he was not far from the Kingdom of God.

[1] Dio Cassius xlii. 1-28.

[2] *Apolog.* 5.

THE END

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OCTOBER 1892

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